TERENTIA;

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE PLATONIC GUARDIAN, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS, &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

In which the calumniator of our Heroine appears triumphant.

FROM the play, Lord Aſhton and his friend ordered their carriage to Brookes's; the former not a little exhilarated by the idea that the greateſt obſtacle to his wiſhes was now removed, by the approaching marriage of his rival, and that a ſhort time would put in his power what he had long been anxious to poſſeſs.

In their way they perceived a crowd, and on enquiring into the cauſe, the ſervant informed them it was occaſioned by the breaking down of a gentleman's carriage.

Sir Paulet Groveſby, for it was no other, was lamenting that a hack was not to be found; and that the dampneſs of the pavement would certainly be productive of a fit of the gout.

Lord Aſhton no ſooner perceived the baronet, than in terms of the utmoſt politeneſs he inſiſted on his taking a place in his carriage.

The offer was gratefully accepted, and after a ſhort encomium on the powers of a Siddons, Sir Paulet introduced the ſubject which lay next his heart—the approaching nuptials of his ſon—embelliſhing it with the beauty, fortune, good-nature, and ſhining abilities of his daughter-in-law elect.

"Ah! Sir Paulet," anſwered Aſhton, "he

he has *now* made a choice worthy your notice; it was well *you* interfered, or he would by all accounts have been finely taken in."

A compliment to his ſagacity ſeldom loſt its power with the baronet; he now without heſitation enlarged on the ſubject; ſaid the perſon his lordſhip alluded to was an artful little gypſey, and that but for the greateſt good fortune in the world he ſhould have been cajoled (to pleaſe his ſon) out of an annuity to make her independent.

"Independent!" cried Sir William with a forced laugh; "How is this, Aſhton? I thought your lordſhip had long before this ſet her above dependance."

Sir Paulet, exhilarated at this diſcovery, anſwered,

"I beg your pardon, but indeed it was entirely owing to my ignorance of this matter, that I was perſuaded to this intention, or otherwiſe I ſhould not have affronted your generoſity by ſup-

poſing ſhe ſtood in need of any other aſſiſtance, I am extremely happy to find her in ſuch good hands; and will, before I ſleep, inform my ſon that ſhe is in no danger of breaking her heart for the loſs of him; for his humanity led him to ſuppoſe ſhe returned his paſſion."

—"His vanity rather," cried Sir William: "Suppoſe, Aſhton, you return the bridegroom elect the portrait which Miſs Sackville preſented you with; it may have a good effect on his mind, and ſave him the trouble of ſitting again; for no doubt Lady Belinda will be pleaſed with ſuch a preſent;—it is really a well-finiſhed piece."

"Pſhaw," replied Aſhton, "this is really ungenerous, Sir William;—to boaſt of a lady's favours is below the true man of gallantry—'tis allowable only in thoſe who think themſelves ſufficiently happy in paſſing for what they have no pretenſion to."

"True,

"True, true," cried the Baronet, piqued at the bare idea that his ſon had been ſo egregiouſly duped. "But I do not, will not, believe a ſon of mine could be guilty of ſuch a folly; unleſs I have ocular demonſtration, I ſhall think you mean to inſult the judgment of one who, let me tell you, gentlemen, is not to be ſlandered with impunity.—What, though I his father make a little free?—s'death, I would ſtrike any man down who dared to ſpeak lightly of his underſtanding!"

"Nay, Sir Paulet," cried Lord Aſhton, "don't think hardly of my friend; on my honour he ſpeaks a fact—and though I deteſt the bare idea of the meanneſs this implies, I muſt convince you of your error in judgment" (ſhewing the picture).

"Well, gentlemen, I can only ſay I am deceived—greatly deceived—to have the portrait of my family handed about by a———excuſe me, gentlemen,

(wrapping his under lip over his upper one) for d——me if I do not feel myſelf more hurt at this public folly, than if he had kept a ſeraglio in private; the fellow had no ſagacity; none at all —a very idiot would have acted with more circumſpection."

"Not quite ſo ſagacious as *you*, Sir Paulet," ſaid Aſhton, with a ſneer, "but as he has now convinced the world he ſaw his error, this trifling affair will ſoon be buried in oblivion; and for the future 'tis ten to one if the ſpirited behaviour of Lady Belinda does not teach him to be more on his guard."

By this time they had reached the baronet's place of reſidence in Parliament-ſtreet. The two friends highly delighted to find a means of leſſening the ill-fated Terentia, in the eyes of all who could ſerve her, drove to their uſual diverſion; and the baronet, brimful of the ſtory, deſired his man to acquaint him when young Mr. Groveſby

returned; resolving, however, to omit that part of the sarcasm which was likely to endanger the life of him, who he well knew had a spirit to defend himself when injured.

In an hour he heard him enter; the man delivered his message; but Mr. Grovesby complained of a violent headach, and desired him to ask if his presence could not be dispensed with.

The truth was, his reflections on the coming day were far from pleasing. Lady Belinda, in the presence of Terentia, appeared to want even those small pretensions, which in his opinion she had ever had to perfection. Her manner was too lively; she appeared to have none of that feminine softness, which is so necessary to sooth the mind, when harassed by disappointments. She might please in the gay circle; and cheer by her sprightliness the hour of festivity; but the solace of sympathy glowed not in her bosom. Born to af-

fluence, and unchecked by misfortune, her heart knew no joy but when ſurrounded by a crowd; and no felicity aroſe in her boſom if muſic, cards, or company filled not up the moment. Can the man of ſentiment, thought he (as the man entered with his meſſage), taſte felicity with a partner ſo every way unequal to creating it? Oh, no! had the lovely Terentia, decked in the pleaſing robe of humility, but bleſſed my future life, I might have expected all that ideal bliſs, which my enraptured fancy had once formed. But here my proſpects are ſo void of light, that the landſcape, when I would view it through a flattering teleſcope, diſguſts my eye by the darkneſs of its hue.

With a countenance in which dejection was too ſtrongly painted to eſcape a father's penetration, he obeyed the unwelcome ſummons, as the ſervant informed him it could by no means be diſpenſed with.

Sir Paulet, without further preface, related his meeting with Lord Aſhton, and the diſcovery he had made of the perfidy of Miſs Sackville; and added, "Thank heaven, I ſhall now be exempted from allowing the ſpecious little witch the proviſion I intended her."

Groveſby was perſiſting in her innocence, and that the falſe imputations with which Aſhton had branded her, were merely the effect of his bad ſucceſs; when the picture, like the blight of the unhealthful eaſt to the opening bud, pierced every avenue of his ſoul, and ſtopped that luxuriance of words which were ſprung up to defend a character ſo aſperſed, as he thought, with undeſerving calumny.

For ſome moments he ſtood motionleſs; but, on an evidence ſo ſtrong, her perfidy ſtood too clearly evinced to admit of extenuation; yet, to believe her culpable, required a heart leſs tinctured with the tender paſſion than Groveſby's; and

though he could not now either with juſtice to himſelf, or virtue, plead her cauſe, yet a ſecret hope beamed over his mind that ſhe was ſtill innocent; though how to reconcile thoſe circumſtances with that hope, required an abler inveſtigator of cauſes and events, than himſelf.

Diſſatisfied with all he had heard, and depreſſed with his own ſituation, he retired from Sir Paulet, who perhaps felt too much joy at being releaſed from an act in which his heart had no intereſt to breath one ſigh for the ſuppoſed depravity of an unſuſpecting orphan.

Bluſh, Humanity, at an idea ſo incongruous to the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, yet ſo often traced in the boſom of Avarice!

CHAPTER XVII.

In which our heroine leaves her preſent reſidence, and arrives at a cottage. Her reception there; with ſome account of the doctor, the curate, &c. &c.

THE thoughts of Terentia were not more tranquil, to be ſuppoſed culpable in the eyes of Groveſby—and in danger of being a ſubject for the numerous retailers of ſcandal which infeſt the ſocieties of the great; doubtleſs too, deprived by the prejudice of Sir Paulet, of the friendſhip of the ſympathizing Mrs. Bryant—nay, perhaps, in danger of loſing her preſent benefactor, was a ſhock too forcible. The powers

of nature ſhrunk at ſo rude a blaſt, and ſhe fainted in the arms of Mr. Mountaign as the carriage made its firſt movement towards Hanover-ſquare.

"Good heavens!" cried Mrs. Mountaign, the ſight of lady Belinda has deprived this unfortunate girl of all that fortitude which has hitherto ſupported her—and Groveſby too; he feels the hard reſtriction of a father's power with an equal pang; ſtrange, that in a point where the happineſs of his future exiſtence is concerned, Sir Paulet ſhould continue ſo arbitrary.

"Extremely unjuſt," anſwered Mr. Mountaign; "for the ſentimental ſoul of Groveſby can never taſte felicity with a woman of her ladyſhip's caſt.—Why has title and affluence, inſignificant as is their real value, ſo great an aſcendency over the human heart?"

The revival of Terentia gave a freſh ſubject for compaſſion, as ſhe now related the reaſon of her fainting.—To

conſole

conſole and fortify her in this unmerited affliction was their firſt care — and, from her natural ſtrength of mind, ſhe was at length prevailed on to conſider the opinion of the world as ſecondary, and to take refuge in the conſciouſneſs of being free from intentional error; while her kind friends propoſed ſending her to an old ſervant of theirs till the preſent rumour, ſo deſtructive to her peace, had ſubſided.

The countenance of Terentia, like the ſun beaming from a cloud, was ſo expreſſive of the calm which took poſſeſſion of her mind at this intelligence, that the heart of Mr. Mountaign experienced unuſual ſatisfaction. A tear of gladneſs ſtrayed unbidden down his cheek at having it in his power to reſcue this amiable unfortunate from the pointed finger of envy, and the more dangerous purſuit of licentiouſneſs.

The next morning early ſhe was conveyed

veyed to a village in H——ſhire, and placed in the cottage of a Mrs. Swinton, a plain country woman, who pretended to be endowed with the ſagacity of a Solomon; and who, to uſe her own expreſſion, could "ſee as far into a millſtone as them that pecks it;" and as Mr. Mountaign had left her with profeſſions of eternal friendſhip, ſhe was thoroughly convinced, in her own mind, that ſomething *more* than friendſhip ſubſiſted between them; ſhe therefore, on obſerving her viſitor ſhed the tear of regret on his taking leave, comforted her in the following manner:

"Come, come, Ma'am, don't be low ſpirited—I dare ſay maſter wont be long before he ſees H—ſhire again—to be ſure he is a ſweet gentleman—and it is a pity that he didnot know ſome people before his wings was ty'd, as the ſaying is. Howſomdever life is very uncertain—and who knows how things may turn

turn out.—Don't deſpair—don't deſpair.—I know I am right—I know your little heart is touched—you are ſo like poor Kitty—ſhe uſed to ſet by the hour together muſing under that there tree there—to be ſure I thought ſhe would have run wild becauſe Jonathan Tib proved falſe—I often prognoſticated as much—but ſhe would never believe it.——Howſomdever, ſhe was convinced, at laſt, that old heads are wiſer than young ones—for Jonathan, ſomehow or other, took a diſlike to her, and went to the Eaſt Indies. Well, and after all, it was, as it happened, for the beſt—for ſoon com'd a vaſt rich gentleman, and took the great houſe there—and as ſure as you are alive, he fell in love with poor Kit, and married her out of hand—and now ſhe dreſſes as well as the parſon's lady herſelf.—But I'll let her know you are here—ſhe'll be wonderfully pleaſed to ſee you—for Kit's got a great notion of gentility, for

all

all ſhe was born in this here cot; but no wonder—for her grandmother, I aſſure you, was wet nurſe to a duke!"

How long this unintereſting harangue would have laſted, it is impoſſible to ſay, had not the clergyman's maid now entered, to enquire if Mrs. Swinton had any fowls fit for the ſpit.

"Fit for the ſpit!—fit for the ſpit!" cried Mrs. Swinton, with a look of conſequence; "'tis a likely thing, truly, that I ſhould have fowls for your company, when my daughter Kitty never touches any thing but poultry.—— No—no, no—no; I have got a few juſt for her uſe, and wo'n't part with any if the great Mogul wanted them; beſides, they are three ſhillings a piece."

"Do you think," ſaid the maid, with a look of diſappointment, "I can get any in the village? I ſhould not mind what I gave for them, ſo I could but get ſome; as we have got ſome very particular company to dine to day, and my miſtreſs will

will be ſadly grieved to have nothing but butcher's meat."

"Butcher's meat!—butcher's meat!—and when pray was your table graced with any thing elſe?—I dare ſay it is ſo long ſince you ſpitted a fowl, you will be at a loſs to do it—beſides, I tell you they are three ſhillings a piece, and will not ſuit your maſter's pocket—no—no—they are not fit for a poor man's table."

The colour of the girl's countenance expreſſed a juſt reſentment at an affront which at once pointed at her maſter's poverty, and her own judgment; and ſhe replied:

"You are ſtrangely altered, Mrs. Swinton, to what you uſed to be!—and, truly, ſince your heart can thus jeſt with the troubles of your betters, I do not think you worthy of that good fortune which has befallen you. My maſter is as good a gentleman as ever graced a pulpit—and would ſcorn to have taken

your

your goods without paying for them." An honeſt tear of indignation bedewed the face of this faithful domeſtic as ſhe quitted the houſe where unfeeling ignorance had wounded a better heart than ſometimes falls to the lot of nobility.

Ah! thought Terentia, who would wiſh for proſperity, when its pernicious poiſon can thus corrupt even thoſe confined within the narrow bounds of uncultivated nature?

The maid was no ſooner gone, than Mrs. Swinton began to expatiate on the poverty of Mr. Fairfax—who, ſhe ſaid, had not had a new caſſock theſe ſeven years—and that his wife was a mean dowdy—and his daughter fit for no one earthly purpoſe but to make verſes and read outlandiſh books.

"Mrs. Fairfax a mean dowdy!" ſaid Terentia, whoſe curioſity was raiſed by this deſcription; "I thought you had intimated her being as faſhionable a lady as your own daughter."

"No—

"No—no, no—no, you take me wrong—'tis not Mrs. Fairfax that I put on a footing with my Kitty—'tis quite another gueſt woman, I aſſure you—'tis the doctor's lady, Madam Sperney, that I mean—they—I ſhould hardly have denied them my poultry. Why all them there fields, as far as ever you can ſee, are the doctor's—indeed there is no end to his riches—and folks ſay as how he will ſoon be made a biſhop."

"Then I hope," ſaid Terentia, "that poor Mr. Fairfax will enjoy the living."

"Why no, I don't think he wou'd, if this news is true—but ſure folks ſay, the doctor wo'n't accept on't—and for that matter why ſhou'd he—for he has not the leaſt trouble *now*, as he never preaches above once a year—and that is when his lordſhip comes to town."

"Does Mr. Fairfax, then, do all the duty?" rejoined Terentia.

"Oh,

"Oh, yes! the doctor's too corpulent, folks ſay, to *preach*; beſides, he enjoys himſelf with his bottle, very often, till the people are coming home from church—and what ſhould he do elſe—why ſhould he trouble himſelf about religion, when he allows Mr. Fairfax *a matter of fifty pounds a year* to take all that off his hands!"

"And pray," ſaid Terentia, "what may be the doctor's income?"

"Why folks ſay, 'tis a matter of eight hundred a year—but then he had a power of money with his wife—Well, and ſo he had need, for he keeps a carriage and four livery ſervants, and lives for all the world like a lord—yes—no lord in the land need live better—and my Kitty has many a ride with madam Sperny—I promiſe you—though I live here in this little hut; and the doctor, for that matter, *ſince Kitty's good fortune*, bows very civilly whenever he meets me;—he is ſuch a comely gentleman—and always looks

looks ſo merry—that it does ones heart good to look at him;—but as to that there Fairfax — he does nothing but walk about with his arms folded—and often runs againſt folks before he ſees them;—as to laughing, I don't believe he knows how—for I have known him theſe ſeven years, and his face is always juſt like that there picture".—(pointing to a penny print, which was meant to repreſent a perſon in diſtreſs.)

Terentia had heard enough to make her wiſh for an acquaintance with a family whoſe misfortunes bore ſo juſt a reſemblance to her own; and being tired with the loquacity of her hoſteſs, ſhe deſired to be left alone, in order to ſolace herſelf with a book — a ſmall number of which Mrs. Mountaign had furniſhed her with.

The next day ſhe wrote an account to Mrs. Bryant of all that had paſſed, ſince the reception of her laſt letter; begging her to run no riſk on her ac-

count in diſpleaſing Sir Pauſet, but believe her innocent, and truſt her to that providence which hovers over the head of thoſe individuals who undeſervedly incur the cenſure of a malignant world!

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The calmneſs of the next morning (for it was one of thoſe when the *keen hoar froſt* animates our ſpirits, and gives new vigour to the languid nerves) tempted her to walk in the adjacent field.

When the mind is without real objects to entertain it—it ſedulouſly endeavours to find out ideal ones, to fill up the void which the loſs of ſociety leaves in the breaſt — Thus Terentia found an imaginary companion in the lovely ſparrow which hopped alternate on the unrobed ſprig—and the atten-

tion

tion of a ſmall ſpaniel recalled to her mind all her former friendſhip.—"Ah!" cried ſhe, "where now is the moſt amiable of men?—can the gay lady Belinda reſtore to him that peace which this unhappy form, I fear, has wounded?—What would I give to know that he taſtes that felicity which he ſo juſtly deſerves!"

She now turned, and obſerved the ſpaniel had left her—"Ah! then, emblem of my every joy, how tranſient is that ſatisfaction which thy ſeeming ſagacity afforded me!—but thou, perhaps, art in poſſeſſion of a friend; and, unlearned in the treachery of human nature, art too grateful to fly from his foſtering hands."

The appearance of a tall thin gentleman, whoſe dreſs and manner convinced her it could be no other than Mr. Fairfax, interrupted her ſoliloquy; but ſhe was diſappointed in her hopes of forming an acquaintance, when with a bluſh

he

he haſtily paſſed her, and hurried into the adjacent incloſure.

This little incident ſo impreſſed her with the idea of being thought an accomplice in the inſult he had received from Mrs. Swinton, that her ſteps involuntarily followed, in order to undeceive him, and relate her own troubles, in hopes of meeting ſympathy from a family whoſe misfortunes had created, in the higheſt degree, that power in her breaſt.

In getting over the ſtile, her foot ſlipt; and in endeavouring to ſave herſelf from falling, a nail caught her ancle, and ſhe now gave up all thoughts of an interview, as the pain from the wound was too ſevere to ſuffer her to proceed, and ſhe was walking home much chagrined and diſappointed, when Mrs. Swinton appeared and told her her daughter was *com'd* on purpoſe to ſee her.

This news by no means compenſated for her paſt perplexity, as the behaviour

of

of the mother had given her a ſufficient ſpecimen of the manners ſhe was to expect—and ſhe would moſt willingly have diſpenſed with an interview in which ſhe could not propoſe to herſelf either edification or entertainment, but it was by no means poſſible to avoid it; and ſhe walked on, in no humour, however, to pay much attention to her loquacious companion.

Mrs. Forman was ſitting, or rather ſquatting in an elbow chair, in a very faſhionable diſhabille; the awkwardneſs of her manner ſtood the more evinced by thus aping, what nothing but a certain air and grace, the offspring of an elevated education, or peculiar perſonal endowments, can ever become.—The prominence which graced her lips far exceeded the common ſize, but made her ſhort corpulent perſon the more conſpicuous; and the load of muſlin placed on a neck which ſcarcely appeared two inches from her ſhoulders,

together with her long ſleeves, ſtretched to the utmoſt by her well-thriven arms, the ſituation of which, in whatever attitude ſhe was in, was always projecting far diſtant from her waiſt, gave her the appearance of an effigy ſet up as a terror to the winged inhabitants of the ſky, rather than that ſhe ſo ſeduloufly endeavoured to imitate—a modern fine lady!

"So Miſs," ſhe cried, without ſo much as attempting to riſe from her chair, "I am vaſtly glad to ſee you; I thought mother could not have found you—I aſſure you, I diſappointed Madam Sperney of my company, becauſe I would not appear unpolite to you—ſeeing, as how, you com'd from London." She then pulled hold of her gown, admired the make, and wiſhed Mr. Forman would let her ſee a place where every thing was ſo clever and faſhionable; "but he'll go no where," ſhe added, "and if any one but Doctor

Sperney

Sperney and his lady comes to the houſe, he always flies to his ſtudy, and I ſee no more of him till they are gone."

"Well, well, child, ſuppoſe he does —ſo long as you can enjoy all the comforts of life, what need you mind?"

"I don't ſay againſt it" ſaid Mrs. Forman; "but he is ſo vapouriſh, that one has no ſort of comfort with him— and if the candle goes out in the night, I am obliged to ring loud enough to raiſe the dead for another — and when it comes, he looks for all the world as if his hair ſtood an end."

"Well, well, no matter which way his hair ſtands, ſo long as you can live like a lady—he may die ſoon—and then you may make Jonathan ſuffer in his turn."

A ſigh heaved from the boſom of Mrs. Forman, at the mention of Jonathan, and convinced Terentia that her ſentiments did not correſpond with this

ideal retaliation. — After which, ſhe turned to that young lady, and ſaid:

"Only I know I ſhall never get him to ſee you, or I would aſk you to invite me to go home with you when you return to London—for I long to ſee the lions—and the tower—and the monument—and all the curioſity ſights — and I don't believe I ſhall ever again have ſuch a nice opportunity."

Happily the ſervant now entered with a meſſage, deſiring ſhe would go home, as his maſter was tired of ſitting alone.

"I dare ſay now," ſhe ſaid, "he'll be ſo odd, he won't ſuffer me to aſk you to come to our houſe—he is ſo ſcrupoloſity about ſtrangers — and ſo anxiety about being ſeen — that one might as well be ſhut up in an old church, and be a companion for ſcreech owls at once."

The curioſity which had been excited in the boſom of Terentia, with regard

to

to the husband's character, was suspended by this pleasing intelligence, and she turned her thoughts again to the parsonage, for a relief from the company of ignorant loquacity."

CHAPTER XVIII.

In which the wheel of Fortune ſeems preponderating in the favour of our Heroine—a ſtrange diſcovery—ſhe leaves the cottage, and returns to London.

THE weather proving ſevere, Terentia employed herſelf alternately in working and drawing—The trees, hedges, and ſhrubs, being univerſally enrobed with ſnow, gave her a ſubject for the latter employment, of which ſhe was very fond; and in the courſe of a fortnight ſhe had finiſhed a complete froſt piece: no other incident occurred, except that a red-breaſt had taken ſhelter under her protection, and lived ſecure from that intenſe cold

which deſtroyed many of its harmleſs race.

A warm rain had ſucceeded the froſt, and ſome faint gleams of Sol's benign rays had turned the face of nature.—When one morning ſhe perceived at a ſmall diſtance from the houſe, a young lady ſo different from any object her eyes had beheld, that a ſecret hope ruſhed into her mind, it might probably be Miſs Fairfax; and ſhe inſtantly put on her cloak, in order to meet, and, by ſome means, undeceive her in the opinion which ſhe could not diveſt herſelf from ſuppoſing they harboured of her being an accomplice in the inſult they had received.

Juſt as ſhe entered the field, a cow having that morning been bereaved of her young, ran furiouſly towards her, and ſo terrified her with the idea of being toſſed, that ſhe ſcreamed aloud for help, and was near fainting, when the young lady before mentioned ſprang

forward to her relief, and assured her the cow was by no means vicious, but that anxiety alone for the loss she had sustained, occasioned her thus earnestly as it were to enquire for her lost offspring. Mr. Fairfax, who had from his house been a spectator of this incident, now approached:

"I am sorry, young lady," he said, "that you have experienced any inconvenience from this poor disconsolate.—Alas! poor animal, she has too much feeling to bear tamely the insult she has this morning met with from those whose hearts are not formed to be affected by that dumb eloquence with which she pleaded the cause of nature — and, like other unfortunate beings, the sad relief of shaking the iron chain of tyranny, to no purpose but to wound the heart of sympathy, and gladden those composed of harder materials, is now the only solace left her."

"The heart, Sir," anſwered Terentia, "muſt indeed be callous, that can ſport with the miſery of an animal in whoſe geſture anguiſh is ſo plainly delineated—and yet, that there are ſuch monſters in human form, experience daily convinces us. I have often felt extreme anguiſh of mind from the cruelty with which I have ſeen a poor harmleſs ox treated by the rude rabble of a village green; and have as often wondered, that the human mind could thus degenerate."

"It is a ſcandal to our nation, that ſuch barbarity is ſuffered," ſaid Mr. Fairfax; "but a little further experience will teach you, that it is but an emblem of the world in general. The ox is not more perſecuted by thoſe miſcreants that ſurround him, than he whoſe poverty ſubjects him to the ſcorn of affluence: where, through refinement may conceal the baſiliſk, its ſtings are not leſs pointed."

"Ah! Sir," cried Terentia, "not only by theory have I already been taught this truth; dear bought experience has long inſtilled into my mind, that want of affluence is too often attended with the dearth of friends! yet there are many characters now exiſting, who are an honour to humanity; among whom the family, that at preſent ſhield me from that ſcorn you ſo feelingly point out, muſt ever be numbered."

They had by this time reached the parſonage, and the wiſhes of Terentia were gratified by a general invitation to their humble dwelling, where the abſence of affluence was richly ſupplied by that conformity of ſentiment, and unity of hearts, which were too conſpicuous for the penetrating eye of Terentia to eſcape; and ſo congenial with her own notions of domeſtic felicity, as to make her leave them with the higheſt regret; and never did dependence ſit more heavy on her ſpirits, than at this inſtant;

inſtant; it rendered her unable to chuſe a place of reſidence where inſtruction and entertainment bore an equal ſhare in filling up the ſocial hour.

During a very pleaſing converſation in an early afternoon's viſit, Terentia found her new friend Sophia had received a very liberal education; that her genius for poetry was unconfined, that her knowledge in literature was much beyond her years; and that her temper was amiable, yet free from that exceſſive timidity which very often proves diſadvantageous (though by no means a proof of ſimplicity) to thoſe who unfortunately poſſeſs it.

The Fairfax's were no leſs gratified with this acquiſition to their pleaſures; and the worthy divine entruſted her with enough of his affairs to convince her too well of the truth of Mrs. Swinton's ſarcaſms, with this addition, that he was no favourite with the doctor; and by ſeveral hints which he dropped, ſhe

found, that avarice, which is too often the characteriſtic of our overgrown clergy, was the reigning principle of Doctor Sperney.

In this agreeable connection Terentia had paſſed ſome weeks, when one evening as Mr. Fairfax was reading ſome favourite poems, while the ladies were employed at their needles, the ſervant of Mr. Forman was announced.—He brought a meſſage from his maſter, deſiring to ſee him immediately and alone.

The good divine obeyed the ſummons; but, by the time he arrived, Mr. Forman had altered his mind, and ſent word that his ſpirits were now too low to admit him, but that he would eſteem it as a favour, if he would call in the morning. The ſervant made an apology for the inconſiſtency of his maſter's behaviour, alledging the diſorder of his mind was at times ſo predominant over his reaſon, that

that the idea of ſeeing ſpectres had more than once poſſeſſed him; and that in his opinion he was little better than a lunatic.

With this ſtrange account, Mr. Fairfax returned to the ladies, and aſked Terentia whether he ever viſited the mother of his wife?

Terentia repeated what ſhe had heard from Mrs. Forman; who, ſhe added, appeared to be much chagrined that his ideas were ſo contracted; and ſadly regretted his pointed diſlike to ſee any company: the ſubject was then dropped, and ſoon after ſhe returned to the cottage.

On her entrance there, ſhe found Mrs. Forman very deeply engaged in diſcourſe with her mother.

"I never," ſaid Mrs. Swinton, in anſwer to what appeared a complaint, "ſaw the like; I would not take on ſo for the beſt huſband in the world; let him die, I ſay, ſo long as he can't carry his

his riches with him; 'tis nothing but a fit of childiſhneſs—I dare ſay he will not be long for this world—the bell tolled as heavy as lead, when foreman Robins was buried; and neighbour Swan's child was as limp as your gauze handkerchief;—but you never mind what I ſay,—you know I have a fore-knowledge of every thing—you know I *prognoſtigated* the death of old brindle the very day ſhe was put into the clover ground."

"I cannot," rejoined the daughter, "ſleep with a mad man—and if you won't go and ſit in the room, I am ſure I won't go to bed—I was frightened enough laſt night with his *fegaries.* I am ſure I trembled every limb of me, when he ſlunk down, and covered himſelf with the bed-cloaths, by reaſon he was ſo anxiety about a ghoſt—and as to being ſcrupoloſity about Miſs Sackville, why ſhe can ſleep in the green-room,

room, and he will know nothing about it."

They both looked at Terentia for an anſwer, whoſe humanity would not ſuffer an inconvenience to herſelf to interfere with a deſire of obliging the diſtreſſed, though ſhe determined to write to Mrs Mountaign, and endeavour to obtain her conſent to take up her future reſidence at the parſonage; having already recommended the good divine to the notice of that worthy family, and had likewiſe been favoured with an anſwer, that every effort would be put in force among his numerous acquaintance to get him preferred.

With this reſolution ſhe reached the houſe of Mr. Forman. She was at firſt ſhewn into the parlour, but that gentleman having (as was his cuſtom) ſent the ſervant to ſee if the coaſt was clear, Terentia was obliged to retire to the green-room before-mentioned; which as it joined that in which they themſelves

ſelves ſlept, ſhe dreaded being diſturbed with the ſtrangeneſs of his diſorder, as it was in the night that his fits were moſt perceptible.

The ſtrangeneſs of the bed, and perhaps ſome reflections of a different kind, kept her waking until the hour of twelve, when ſhe dropped into a ſweet ſleep; and the form of Groveſby, releaſed from thoſe chains which at preſent bound him, appeared to her view: ſhe was buſied in an hundred enquiries how all thoſe things had come to paſs, when the voice of Bankerton, vibrating through her ſoul, converted every idea into another channel, by the following ſoliloquy:

"Worthy Hatfield! much injured orphan! to what diſtreſs may not my villainy have reduced you; yet ſpare me, Sackville; I have not, will not uſe the money which you thought intruſted to better hands! Spare me, thou

thou griſly phantom: if your lovely offſpring yet exiſts, I will reſtore it."

Horror, hope, and fear alternately reigned in the boſom of Terentia, from a diſcovery ſo ſtrange and unexpected. That he had purloined from the property of Mr. Hatfield, ſhe had never doubted; but to ſecrete, as it was now evident he had done, the caſh remitted by her father, without the knowledge of Mr. Hatfield, appeared quite an enigma. With anxious expectation, therefore, ſhe waited the coming morn; when ſhe ſtrayed into the garden, the gate of which led into the field, before any one, except the ſervants, were ſtirring; and on the wings of high raiſed expectation arrived at the parſonage, juſt as Mr. Fairfax deſcended the ſtair-caſe. She related as briefly as poſſible what ſhe had heard; and by his advice wrote immediately to Mr. Bryant, begging his aſſiſtance in a matter of ſo much importance to her future eſtabliſhment; after

which

which ſhe returned to the lodge, reſolving, under pretence of accompanying Mrs. Forman, to leave it no more until ſhe was reſtored to that property ſhe had thus feloniouſly been robbed of.

As Mr. Bryant had taken a poſt-chaiſe the moment he received the letter, he was at the parſonage before the cloſe of the next evening from that on which this diſcovery was made; and he, together with Mr. Fairfax, reached the houſe of Bankerton by ſix the next morning: and the former having informed the woman he had a recipe, which would entirely eradicate thoſe kind of diſorders, he was ſhewn into the room in which Terentia was ſitting, whoſe joy, on ſeeing her long abſent friend, was not abated by the hope of ſoon having it in her power to return, with gratitude, the favours ſhe had already received.

The mother, who was deſired to draw

draw him into a converſation, in order that the ſuppoſed gentleman of the faculty might the better inveſtigate his diſeaſe, enquired "how he had reſted."

"I ſhall never reſt again," he anſwered; "I am haunted with mid-night ſpies, which torture me with their predictions that I ſhall ſoon be cut off from every earthly joy."

"You muſt compoſe yourſelf, Sir, you muſt compoſe yourſelf; I can't imagine what has filled your head with ſuch odd *vagaries*; I never ſaw any thing like you—you are like one poſſeſſed; I wiſh you would let me go to the wiſe man; mayhap he could cure you."

"If," anſwered Bankerton, "you ſay a word to the wiſe man; or any other man about me, I'll turn you both out of doors: would you bring me to the gal——— he ſtopped; and Mr. Bryant now

now ſtepped forth, and drawing the curtain aſide ſaid,

"Reſtore, villain, the property of this injured orphan; and your age may perhaps ſave you from that proſecution you ſo much dread, and which you ſo richly deſerve."

"Ah!" anſwered Bankerton, looking furiouſly at his wife, is it thus you betray me?"

"No trifling," cried Mr. Bryant; "reſtore the caſh which you laſt night promiſed, in the hearing of Miſs Sackville, to her father; or you inſtantly change your reſidence for that of the county gaol, where that puniſhment you have ſo long deſerved awaits you; and tell me, without further equivocation, to what does it amount; how long you have been poſſeſſed of it; and if Mr. Sackville lives;"

"The ſum, Sir," cried the trembling miſcreant, "is twenty thouſand pounds, which

which I received in India bonds the evening on which I left the beſt of maſters, with a letter to the deceaſed; it was the laſt Mr. Sackville wrote, and was delivered, by his deſire, after his death, which happened ſix months before I received it. This, Sir, is the truth; I own I deſerve no clemency; yet did you know the torture of a burthened conſcience, the goodneſs of a heart like your's would pity as well as condemn the frailties of a truly wretched man."

"Reſtore inſtantly the money, and fly a country where juſtice allows not partiality to villainy ſuch as this," ſaid Mr. Bryant, "leſt your injuſtice gets wind, and in that caſe we cannot ſcreen you from the rigour of the law."

Bankerton aroſe, and, after much labour, took up a board, under which he had hid the notes; and with trembling hands reſtored them to Terentia; whoſe boſom, even at the moment when paſ-

ſions

ſions might have been excuſed, and revenge juſtified, ſtill glowed with humanity; and ſhe enquired to what this reſtoration of her property had reduced him.

"All," he anſwered, "that I can juſtly call my own, is fifteen hundred pounds. Theſe, "giving ſome papers from his bureau, "are the property of my late maſter's creditors: and now ſuffer me, thus on my knees, to hope for pardon from the lips of her I have ſo cruelly injured; that once granted, I truſt heaven will forgive me, and compoſe my bewildered intellects."

"You have it," ſaid Terentia; "but where is the letter you received from my father?"

Bankerton turned pale as he acknowledged that to prevent a diſcovery he had committed it to the flames. "But this," ſaid he, taking from an inner drawer a ſmall miniature, "is providentially preſerved."

It was the likeneſs of Mr. Sackville, and Terentia placed it in her boſom; but finding that Bankerton had ſufficient to ſupport himſelf and wife in that ſphere of life in which they were born, and thinking that an application to buſineſs would be a better ſecurity againſt temptation, than a life of leiſure, ſhe gave up all thoughts of returning a ſmall part, as ſhe at firſt intended; judging it to be an abuſe of heaven's goodneſs to herſelf to ſupport in affluence a perſon ſo unprincipled, and who had been ſo devoid of gratitude to the beſt of maſters.

They now returned to the parſonage; where, after a day ſpent in rejoicing at an event in which all parties were likely to be the happier, Mr. Bryant ſet off to acquaint his ſecond ſelf that a ſhort period of time would bring the grateful Terentia to her arms; while that young lady employed herſelf in

writing

writing an account of her unexpected good fortune to Mrs. Mountaign promising to call in her way to Bryant hall, and ſpend a few days with that benevolent family.

Her next wiſh was to ſet above the world the worthy Fairfax; but as ſhe doubted not the ſtrenuous exertions of Mr. Mountaign in his favour, ſhe contented herſelf with preſenting him with a ſmall ſum for his preſent exigencies.

Calmed by the ſunſhine of proſperity, and cheered by the luxuriant idea of the good ſhe ſhould be enabled to do —in a week after ſhe left a place, which on her firſt entrance had promiſed her nothing but diſcomfort; but from which ſhe had now derived two of the greateſt bleſſings of life—independence, and a true friend—Ah! thought ſhe (as ſhe waved a laſt adieu to Sophia) how cauſeleſs did I lament the evils that occaſioned

casioned my journey to this place; and how little does the weak opticks of humanity perceive the clue that guides it!

CHAPTER XIX.

A lover—a newſmonger—a combat, in which Friendſhip appears triumphant over her ſiſter Affection.

TERENTIA was congratulated with the utmoſt ſincerity by her friends in Hanover-ſquare, on the fortunate event which had taken place ſince they laſt parted; but the lady of that hoſpitable manſion, who had a real affection for Terentia, could not think of parting with her at ſo ſhort a period as that which ſhe had ſet for her preſent viſit; ſhe therefore, previous to her coming, had written and obtained the promiſe of Mrs. Bryant's company; and Terentia experienced an agreeable ſurprize when three

three days after as they were ſet down to dinner, the arrival of that dear friend added much to her preſent happineſs, and gave her an opportunity of expreſſing that gratitude, which on all occaſions ſeemed to flow ſpontaneouſly from her heart.

Different ſenſations agitated her boſom a few days after, when Mr. Conyers was announced. His ambiguous language, joined to the ſecret ſpring from whence his attention to her welfare had ariſen, convinced her he could be no leſs than the boſom friend of Groveſby, and conſequently entruſted with the knowledge of his unfortunate attachment; a ſigh at the unpleaſing recollection eſcaped her, while a crimſon of the deepeſt die tinged her cheek, as ſhe introduced him to Mrs. Bryant, as the gentleman who had reſcued her from impending ruin.

The mind of Conyers was ſtill more untranquil; the report of her good for-

tune had reached him, and marred every riſing hope which had, from the marriage of Groveſby, taken place in his breaſt. He ſtrove to be himſelf, but in vain; he faultered in his accents as he congratulated her on it, and was unable to anſwer the ſeveral queſtions ſhe had put concerning Mr. Burdet, and Lady Aſhton—wiſhed he had denied himſelf this laſt *luxury* of ſeeing her, and condemned a conduct which he could not alter.

From a ſituation truly diſtreſſing, he was in ſome meaſure relieved by the arrival of Miſs Hambleton, who now entered, and told Mrs. Mountaign that ſhe was quite tired with her morning's ramble. After which ſhe enquired if ſhe had heard news reſpecting Lady Bab Wingly.

Mrs. Mountaign anſwered in the negative, and ſhe proceeded:

"Lord, ma'am, how ſtrange it is you never hear any thing;—why, I thought every

every body had known it; it is full three days ſince my maid heard it from her ladyſhip's woman, and I am ſure I was quite petrified with the very idea of ſuch treatment. Do you know, that wretch, Benſon, leaves her for a week together; and takes no notice at all about any thing but his pleaſures!"

"I am exceedingly ſorry," ſaid Mrs. Mountaign, "though not equally ſurprized—what could her ladyſhip expect, from ſo imprudent a proceeding? —When was you at Wingly-place?"

"La, ma'am, not ſince I paid the bride viſit—what ſignifies diſtreſſing ones ſelf with hearing nothing in the world but complaints. Do you know her ladyſhip is more melancholy now, than when her daughter firſt left her?"

"And is that a reaſon why ſhe is to be abandoned by her friends?" ſaid Mrs. Bryant, in a tone of aſtoniſhment.

"An eſtabliſhed maxim, I aſſure you,"

you," ſaid Mr. Mountaign; "the feelings of our modern fine ladies are by much too refined to endure the voice of miſery, even in thoſe who act by the ſame principle with themſelves—to fly from affliction, and check the ſmall remains of nature in the human mind, by ſcenes of amuſement, is *now* the only faſhionable mode of ſerving *our friends* —and this, I aſſure you, is called toniſh philoſophy.

"It is a philoſophy, ſaid Mrs. Bryant, ſo ill adapted to the dignity of the human underſtanding, and ſo incongruous to that true delicacy, and feminine ſweetneſs which ought to characterize every female mind, that I truſt it has not many converts to its ſyſtem."

Miſs Hambleton, who, during this comment, had been employed in admiring a new morning dreſs which Mrs. Mountaign wore, now reſumed the thread of her diſcourſe.

"Well, ma'am, but I have forgot to tell

tell you that Mrs. Raby, Miſs Wingly that was, had humbled herſelf ſo far as to beg pardon of her mother; and that Benſon had ordered her to be ſent from the door—you can't imagine how diſtreſſed ſhe was—only you know it is not ſo well to interfere in family feuds, or I ſhould—for I had a great mind, I aſſure you, to aſk her to ſtay a few days with us, ſhe looked ſo very wretched."

"Is ſhe then deſtitute of ſupport?" anſwered Terentia, whoſe boſom glowed with the idea of reſcuing her from her preſent diſtreſs.

"La, yes, ma'am; why the fellow has nothing in the world but twenty pounds a year for attending the ſchool, to ſubſiſt on—his vanity is finely humbled, ha, ha!—He thought of gracing Lady Bab's carriage, but he is miſtaken; though I am vaſtly ſorry for my poor young friend; we were once very intimate."

"Did ſhe come directly from Wingly-place," ſaid Mrs. Mountaign, "when ſhe informed you of this inhuman reception?"

"Yes, ma'am, and I am ſure my heart ached to ſee her; you can't imagine how ſhe lamented her hard fate, as ſhe termed it. I ſhould moſt certainly have invited her to ſtay a day or two, but I had ſome thoughts of going to the Opera; and then you know it would have been extremely rude to have appeared languid and queer, and that I ſhould certainly have done; for you can't conceive how extremely I was hurt to ſee an old ſchool-fellow in ſuch an unhappy ſituation."

"I dare ſay," cried Mr. Mountaign, "your grief was exceſſive; I wonder you did not endure an electrical ſhock, by way of exhilarating your depreſſed ſpirits."

"Lord, Sir, what ideas! do you ſuppoſe my nerves are a compound of

 iron,

iron, that I could condeſcend to any thing ſo monſtrous barbarous."

"Oh no," anſwered Mrs. Bryant, "the gentleman could not be guilty of ſo palpable a miſtake, when you have given ſuch convincing demonſtration that your whole frame is a compound of *tender ſenſibility*, and *god-like philanthropy*."

Regardleſs of ſatire, or the opinion of the world, and eager to indulge a propenſity to newſmongering, ſhe turned from that lady, unhurt by her reproof, and addreſſing Mrs. Mountaign, aſked her if ſhe had yet viſited Lady Belinda Groveſby.

Mrs. Mountaign anſwered in the affirmative, glancing an eye at Terentia, whoſe face expreſſed an emotion ſhe vainly ſtrove to hide.

"Well, ma'am, and how do you like her choice?" interrogated Miſs Hambleton. I think him the oddeſt creature I ever ſaw—he is ſo abſent you

can't imagine, and ſo horridly ſtupid, that I don't believe I ſhould like him at all."

"Then," ſaid Mr. Mountaign, ſmiling, "you would make a very faſhionable pair; for I am much miſtaken if Mr. Groveſby would not return that compliment with intereſt."

"Perhaps ſo," anſwered ſhe, bridling with contempt; "if, as I hear is the caſe, he parted with his affections before he gave me his hand. Well, I wonder what could poſſeſs her ladyſhip to marry him; I am ſure, from what I hear, ſhe had better relinquiſhed her claim."

"I have no doubt," ſaid Mrs. Bryant (greatly hurt that ſo much had been ſaid in the preſence of Terentia) "but the affection of her ladyſhip, joined with the prudence of Mr. Groveſby, will render them comparatively happy: to be completely ſo, is not the lot of humanity."

"La,

"La, ma'am, how can ſhe be happy, when all the world ſees his regard for her is but mere pretence? I am ſure, if I was her ladyſhip, I would have no ſuch ſycophants under my roof as Miſs Muſgrove."

"Miſs Muſgrove!" reiterated Mrs. Mountaign, in accents of ſurpriſe.

"Why la, ma'am," interrupted Miſs Hambleton, "don't you know that it was through the machinations of that flirt, that Mr. Groveſby deſerted a ſweet young creature, who is ſince gone off with Lord Aſhton—it is no ſecret, I aſſure you, but well known to all the domeſtics that ſhe is and has long been diſtractedly in love with Mr. Groveſby, and nobody ſcruples to ſay, that it was with a deſign to ſet them at variance, that ſhe has taken ſuch pains to gain the friendſhip of lady Belinda—though her ladyſhip is ſo exceedingly infatuated with her ſuppoſed merits, that if any one was to endeavour to undeceive her,

I dare ſay ſhe would not believe a word of the matter."

"No one who is ſenſible of Mr. Groveſby's true ſentiments," cried Mrs. Bryant, "will ever credit that he has a partiality for a character ſo diſſimilar to his own—Miſs Muſgrove may be imprudent—but Groveſby can never be unjuſt."

Mr. Conyers, tenacious for the character of Terentia (who had taken an opportunity to withdraw from a converſation in which ſhe was too much intereſted) now turned to Miſs Hambleton, and ſaid,

"I muſt beg leave to undeceive you, madam, with regard to one aſperſion which you have thought proper to beſtow on my friend. The young lady you allude to was too juſtly regarded by Mr. Groveſby, to meet the fate you hint at from him; and far ſuperior to all the low arts of an Aſhton, to deſerve

the

the calumny you have attempted to brand her with."

During this ſpeech Miſs Hambleton played with her fan, and looked extremely ſilly; perhaps for the moment ſhe determined to be more cautious of retailing ſcandal.—For with much confuſion, ſhe anſwered,

"I am ſorry, Sir, I have offended you——I am perhaps miſtaken—I declare I repeated no more than I heard; and if it is not true, I ſincerely beg the lady's pardon; for though unknown to me, I ſhould be ſorry to wound her fame. Lady Aſhton's woman, however, told it to Miſs Grenville's Ann, and ſhe informed my Jenny—but if it is a miſtake, I am ſorry I ſaid any thing about it;—I am always remarkably *cautious* of traducing people's characters—it is certainly the cruelſt thing in nature; and I am determined to order Jenny to get a clearer light into this matter—

matter—though I never yet found her miſtaken."

She then turned to Mrs. Mountaign, and deſired the company of herſelf and friend, at her next rout; after which, pretending to recollect an appointment with a young lady, ſhe hurried to her carriage, leaving Conyers a prey to the corroding torments which wound the heart of that man whoſe poverty appears a barrier even to the hopes of ſucceeding with the woman on whom his fondeſt affections are placed.

Hurt by the mortifying aſperſion which had been caſt on her character, Terentia would gladly have been excuſed joining the company; but Mrs. Mountaign would by no means ſuffer her to indulge that melancholy which the redneſs of her eyes too plainly evinced had taken poſſeſſion of her heart: and after doing all in her power to diſſuade her from noticing a report which

which would ſoon be obliterated by her future conduct and appearance in the world, the latter of which ſhe judged (as ſhe ſaid) highly neceſſary to render its fallacy more obvious, ſhe ventured to ſpeak of Conyers in terms of the higheſt approbation—indeed, my dear, ſhe added, he deſerves, and I hope will meet with a return to an affection as diſintereſted, as I am ſure it will be permanent.

Terentia was too well convinced of the friendſhip of Mrs. Mountaign, to admit a doubt of the juſtneſs of her advice, and replied,

"I am far from inſenſible, deareſt madam, to the merits of Mr. Conyers, nor am I blind to that affection which beams from a countenance in which is diſplayed the emblem of a heart replete with the tendereſt ſenſibility:—yet though I eſteem him, it is all I can do; and while my treacherous heart baffles every effort to conquer a paſſion for another, however

however I may wish to act the undisguised friend to Mr. Conyers, surely you cannot advise me to risk his happiness, by giving him my hand under such circumstances."

"The prudence of a mind like yours, my dear, cannot fail rendering affection so conspicuous as that of Mr. Conyers, all the felicity he deserves; in consulting his happiness, I have no doubt but your own will be lasting."

They now dropped the subject and returned to the parlour, but the traces of sorrow still appeared in the eye of Terentia. Conyers observed it, and was still more wretched—a tear of real anguish gushed from his eye, as he again regretted his want of that fortune which could now make his affections appear disinterested; and in the utmost despondency he was about to take his leave, when Mrs. Mountaign insisted on his spending the day with them, and escorting them to lady O——'s rout in the evening;

evening; and Terentia, ſtruck with his emotion, involuntarily joined in the requeſt.

The eye of Conyers gliſtened with ſenſibility at a condeſcenſion at once ſo unlooked for, and ſo gratifying; but when meek-eyed poverty, with its gloomy train glided acroſs his mind—the hand which had raiſed itſelf to preſs to his lips that of hers whoſe voice had cheered his drooping ſpirits, ſunk languid from its purſuit, and refuſed to do its office.

A ride in the park had before been propoſed; and, under pretence of getting their hats, the two ladies now left the room; and Terentia, unable to invent an excuſe for ſo doing (hers being already on) felt herſelf awkwardly ſituated, and at a loſs for a ſubject that might ſerve to diſpel the exceſſive embarraſſment with which Conyers ſeemed oppreſſed.

The diſtreſs, however, of the unhappy

happy Mrs. Raby ſoon helped her to one, and ſhe aſked him if he had ever ſeen, or was acquainted with that family.

He anſwered, "that Lady Bab Wingly and his mother had formerly been acquainted, but, for reaſons unknown to himſelf, the intercourſe between the families had before her death ſubſided."

Terentia was expreſſing her wiſhes to bring about a reconciliation between thoſe parties, or by ſome means ſave the unfortunate fair one from impending poverty, when Mr. Conyers caught her hand.

"Ah! madam," he cried, "why am I curſed with its gripe? why am I not on a level with the only woman on earth that can give me felicity?"

The ladies' return prevented a reply, which would in all probability have been more favourable to the diſtreſſed Conyers than he expected; for never had

had the ſuſceptible mind of Terentia experienced ſo great a deſire to ſubmit to the judgment of her friends as at that moment; and her mind, during her ride, was totally occupied in reflections which rather increaſed, than diminiſhed, her preſent prepoſſeſſion in his favour.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XX.

A walk in the Park—Friendly interpoſition—An act of charity—and a diſagreeable rencontre.

SOON after they entered the Park, Mrs. Mountaign mentioned her intention of calling on lady Bab Wingly. This ſo exactly correſponded with the wiſh of Terentia, that ſhe begged, if it was not improper, to accompany her.

"By no means, my dear," ſhe anſwered, "we will try our united force to reſtore tranquillity to the poor Mrs. Kerby. Lady Bab is not naturally of a bad diſpoſition; her indiſcretions have chiefly ariſen from a too great conformity

mity to modern manners, rather than from a want of maternal affection. I can hardly imagine ſhe herſelf was acceſſary to the calumny which Miſs Hambleton has juſt circulated among her acquaintance.

After ſetting down Mrs. Bryant and Mr. Conyers, in the Birdcage-walk, the two ladies proceeded on their viſit of mediation.

They found her ladyſhip in her dreſſing-room, attended by Mr. Benſon, who appeared, by his dreſs, to be juſt returned from a morning ride.

Lady Bab upbraided Mrs. Mountaign of unkindneſs, in ſtaying ſo long from her houſe.

That lady anſwered,—that ſhe had waited to hear the deſirable news of a reconciliation taking place between her ladyſhip and Mrs. Kerby, and was now come as a petitioner in behalf of that miſguided young lady.

Her

Her ladyſhip ſhook her head—caſt an eye on Mr. Benſon—and burſt into tears.

"Surely," continued Mrs. Mountaign, who now perceived the real cauſe from whence the ſuppoſed diſaffection aroſe, as the tender mother was too ſtrongly depicted in the countenance of lady Bab, to admit of a doubt of her lenity, "you will not ſuffer the only child of the late lord Wingly to want the common neceſſaries of life! She has acted imprudently in marrying without your conſent, I'll allow; but let me intreat your ladyſhip, not to juſtify her in any further deviation from rectitude, by withdrawing a protection ſo neceſſary to her future eſtabliſhment. If the man is worthy, your family and connections will gain him reſpect.—Merit," glancing an eye at Mr. Benſon, "in *your own* opinion, has out-weighed mercenary views. Let not a child reflect, that ſhe is driven from the arms of a mother,

a mother, by acting the very part ſhe herſelf has performed."

Had Mrs. Mountaign touched on any other ſtring — all her perſuaſions had been in vain — but, ſuch is the propenſity of the human mind, however unworthy, to be thought virtuous — and ſo pleaſing, at this inſtant, was that idea to Benſon, who till this moment had ſtrongly oppoſed a reconciliation, that he now thanked Mrs. Mountaign for her kind interpoſition, and aſſured her it was what he had long wiſhed for.

The eyes of lady Bab were expreſſive of grateful ſenſibility for this piece of friendſhip; and Mrs. Mountaign having gained her point, after ſaying ſhe ſhould be happy to congratulate them in perſon whenever friendſhip again ſubſiſted between them, took her leave — while Terentia, not leſs gratified by their ſucceſs, experienced a tide of joy when the ideal meeting preſented

ſented itſelf—nor would the glad tear be ſuppreſſed.

They found on their return to the Park, that Miſs Hambledon had joined their party.

"So, Ma'am!" ſhe cried, the moment they approached, "you have been to ſee poor lady Bab—I declare, I had ſome thoughts of calling there myſelf—but I have met with a misfortune that has rendered me quite miſerable. Do you know, I have loſt poor Pompy!——I ordered him laſt night ſome fricaſee of veal ſweetbreads, for his ſtomach has always been too delicate for common nouriſhment — and that careleſs huſſy, my cook, I ſuppoſe, ſeaſoned it too high—for when I returned home to change my dreſs, after I left you, I found the poor creature ſo ill, that I really thought him dead. And though I ſent for Surgoen W—, who, you know, has on all occaſions attended our family, and offered him fifty

guineas

guineas to ſave his life, he would not come; becauſe, truly, a naſty negro fellow (who could not pay him a farthing for his trouble) had juſt fallen from a ſcaffold and fractured his ſcull—as if the ſweet little creature was not of more conſequence than ſuch a wretch as that!"

"The deed," cried a voice, the utterer of which was inviſible, "will be recorded in heaven! but whether the book ſet apart for that purpoſe will have a ſimilar depoſit, I know not? Though that in which the abuſe of money is ſet down, will doubtleſs be filled to the margin. Oh! ſhameful luxurioufneſs! and ſtrange diſpenſation of events! that the dogs of the affluent ſhould thus be gorged with dainties, which the indigent human being, never ſo much as dreams of!"

The juſtneſs of the rebuke, cauſed the company to turn back in ſearch of the ſpeaker; when to the no ſmall ſur-

priſe of Terentia, her old acquaintance, the hoſpitable man to whom ſhe was indebted for her breakfaſt on the morn- ſhe left Bryant Hall, ſeated with his little Toby under a ſpreading elm, appeared to her view.

" Ah!" ſhe cried, as ſhe approached the venerable ſage, " do I again ſee my kind hoſt! and ſee him too at a time when I can thus" taking from her pocket ten guineas, " repay his hoſpitality! Purchaſe with this ſome raiment that better becomes the dignity of your mind!"

She then gave him her addreſs, reſolving to reſcue him from a ſituation ſo much below what he appeared to deſerve—and ſo *incongruous* to his age, and thoſe ſilver hairs which graced his venerable aſpect, and haſtened from him to prevent that exceſs of gratitude which appeared burſting from a heart debilitated with the ruthleſs ravage of progreſſive calamity.

She

She then explained an enigma which had filled all preſent with ſurpriſe—and which was now creative of various ſenſations in their different minds. Mrs. Bryant, though ſhe admired the generoſity; did not inſtantly coincide with the largeneſs of the depoſit. Mrs. Mountaign being ſenſible of the multiplicity of frauds which are daily practiſed in and about the metropolis, was anxious leſt ſhe ſhould be impoſed on; while Mr. Conyers, who had formed no other opinion than that the object was a proper one, was ruminating on the goodneſs of her heart, and lamenting his hard fate, in not being able to emulate an act ſo god-like. No one, however, offered to comment on the matter, till Miſs Hambleton, with a face expreſſive of much concern, cried out:

"Lord, Ma'am, why what profuſion! do you know you will never, from this

inſtant, be able to ſtir without impertinence; as he will certainly inform all his crew of your benevolence; ſo you will doubtleſs have a ſet of vagabonds ſcraping and bowing wherever you ſet your foot — but, perhaps, you would glory in a ſight ſo heavenly! for my part, I hate oſtentation!"

"Every one has their peculiar ideas with regard to the propriety of ſpending their money;" anſwered Terentia, a little piqued at the word, oſtentation. "I am quite ſatisfied with what I have done—and ſhall think myſelf well repaid, if my charity caſts one ray of tranquillity over a mind that ſeems formed for even an elevated ſituation, though at preſent overclouded by miſery and want."

A ſhower of rain now cauſed them to re-enter, the carriage, and as they were returning home, the voice of lord Aſhton much alarmed Terentia, with, "Heavens and earth, there is Miſs Sackville!

Sackville! — How lucky, after all my endleſs toil to ſee her once again!"

"Be not alarmed, my love," ſaid Mrs. Bryant, who had likewiſe heard the expreſſion, and now ſaw the change in her countenance; "I am extremely ſorry for this *interview*, and I know of but one expedient by which you can extricate yourſelf from his audacious importunity."

"What! deareſt Madam;" ſaid Terentia eagerly, "I would moſt willingly do any thing to be free from a purſuit ſo diſagreeable to my inclinations and ſo injurious to my character."

"Nothing more, my dear girl," anſwered that lady drily, "than to give your hand to ſome worthy man, whoſe mind is formed to make you taſte that felicity you deſerve. There are characters," glancing her eye on Mr. Conyers, "which I am perſuaded are quite

equal to the taſk, and who will then have a right to protect you from thoſe inſults, which in ſo daring an adverſary, can only by ſuch means be repelled."

Terentia, who was not aware that ſo pointed an expreſſion was to follow her enquiry, coloured very high, and did not at the moment appear overwiſe.

"A good omen!" ſaid Mrs. Mountaign. "Thank you Ma'am," to Mrs. Bryant, "for the means of ſo pleaſing a diſcovery!"

Terentia now bluſhed a ſtill deeper crimſon; while the fine intelligent eyes of Conyers ſeemed all anxiety with internal joy!

They had now reached Hanover-ſquare, and Terentia hurried to her room, to ruminate on an event at once ſo terrific, mortifying, and diſtreſſing. The advice of her friends, however repugnant to her wiſhes, ſhe now conſidered as the only means of extricating

herſelf

herſelf from the perſecution of a man whoſe principles had rendered him an object of deteſtation, and whoſe attendance on her perſon could not fail of rendering her a butt for the pointed finger of Calumny to ſhoot at.

CHAPTER XXI.

A conflict—An intruſion productive of much terror to our heroine—with the arrival of a Friend—and a treaty of marriage concluded.

IN this diſpoſition of mind ſhe returned to the parlour, where ſhe was met by Conyers, who pleaded with ſuch energy of expreſſion the cauſe which lay next his heart, that after a hard ſtruggle between love and diſcretion, ſhe anſwered:

" The partiality which Mr. Conyers has long ſhewn me, does me the greateſt honour—be aſſured, Sir, in return, you are in the poſſeſſion of my moſt ſincere eſteem—

eſteem—and if I could inſure your happineſs by the offer of my hand, believe me, I would not heſitate—but while I am a bankrupt in that paſſion, on which alone depends felicity in the married ſtate—it would *in you* be the higheſt imprudence to accept it."

"It would be ſacrilege," cried he in a tone of rapture, "to doubt happineſs with ſuch an angel! Bleſſed with your eſteem, what have I to fear? Nothing," he continued, "but that every effort to deſerve ſuch condeſcenſion, will fall far ſhort of my intention."

"The ladies now joined them, and Conyers, having informed them of his approaching felicity, it was agreed that an early marriage ſhould take place, and that, to prevent any further trouble from lord Aſhton, Terentia ſhould not appear in public till Mr. Conyers had a right to protect her from inſult—ſhe accordingly declined going to lady D——'s route in the evening, and

wiſhing to ſpend that interval alone, ſhe inſiſted that Mr. Conyers ſhould, as it was before intended, eſcort the ladies to Portland-ſquare.

In revolving in her mind all the paſt events of her life, and forming a plan for her future eſtabliſhment, Terentia paſſed the firſt two hours of her retirement.—What further ideas would have ariſen in her mind is uncertain; for the door opened, and lord Aſhton, who from the moment he firſt caught ſight of her, had ſet his ſervant to find out her place of reſidence, entered, intending to plead as an excuſe to the family, for what he knew would be termed, cruel perſecution—an inſurmountable affection—and an intention of honourable treatment, by divorcing his preſent lady, who was ſtill on the Continent, living in open adultery with her paramour, Standly.

Terror, ſcorn, and diſappointment, at once fluſhed the countenance of Terentia.

rentia. She demanded why ſhe was thus to be perſecuted?—and why thus impudently purſued? She then, without waiting for an anſwer, rang with violence a ſmall bell which was ſo contrived as to reach the nurſery, hoping, by that means, for the company of Miſs Mountaign — but a few minutes convinced her, that it was to no purpoſe, as the child was in bed; and nurſe, who had been ill ſome time, had taken an opiate, and was likewiſe in the arms of Morpheus. She then enquired for Mrs. Mountaign's woman?—but unfortunately ſhe was gone to ſee her ſiſter, and was not expected home till ſuch time as the route broke up.

When the ſervant was withdrawn, lord Aſhton, with an air of triumph, approached her:

"Why is this lovely countenance ſo expreſſive of terror?" he cried, "and why is affection like mine, treated with ſuch ſcorn?—I find I am uncommonly

lucky to night—and that my ſtars ſhine propitious to my wiſhes! thus, catching her in his arms, and ſaluting her with fervour, let me ſhew a regard that ſhall be laſting as life, and which is by far too great to be trifled with! Nay, look not ſo averſe to my honourable intentions—for ſuch they are, and ſhall continue. Return but my affection, and a divorce ſhall inſtantly take place—in order that I may, with juſtice, be intitled to call ſuch a bleſſing mine."

"Never!" cried Terentia, with more ſpirit than he expected to find her poſſeſſed of. "I would not join myſelf with ſuch an unprincipled profligate for the univerſe."

"Then," anſwered his lordſhip, with equal ſcorn, "I know what I have to truſt to, and will proceed accordingly."

He had during this interval drawn her too far from the bell, had her terror ſuffered her to have applied to it

for

for relief from his rude graſp. She was however in no condition to reſcue herſelf—for being quite frightened at his manner, ſhe ſunk into a chair, and in accents which would have melted a heart leſs obdurate than his, was beſeeching him to leave her, when the door opened a ſecond time, and her good angel, in the form of Groveſby, entered the room.

Unconſcious of her return, yet fully convinced by Mrs. Mountaign of her innocence, he had ſtrolled out in order to inform himſelf concerning the rumour which had reached him, of the reſtitution of her fortune. What then muſt be his ſenſations, when, on opening the door, he perceived her ſeated in the above poſition; while Aſhton, with an air of defiance, ſeemed bent on taking this opportunity to perpetrate his villainous deſigns.

"What is it I ſee!" ſaid he, "Miſs Sackville! and in tears too!"

Terentia

Terentia ſprung involuntarily towards him,—while Aſhton fiercely ſaid:

"Sir, I thank you not for this intruſion—this lady and myſelf could have found the means of a reconciliation without your interference."

"Your lordſhip," ſaid Groveſby, "would wiſh me to infer from this—that you are on *good* terms with this lady—but ſuch a countenance can never be capable of deceit; and you, my lord, have endeavoured to blaſt in the world's eye, a character you ought to revere!——Say, Miſs Sackville, is my preſence neceſſary to protect you from inſult?"

"If the leaſt remains of that friendſhip with which you once honoured me, ſtill exiſts for a wretched orphan—If, as I ever thought, the love of virtue reigned predominant in your boſom, leave me not with this vileſt of men—who with a heart darker than the midnight wanderer who plunders for his daily

daily ſubſiſtence, has meanly watched the abſence of the family, to inſult one who equally deteſts and ſcorns him."

"Your own heart, my lord — the cauſe of humanity — the future peace of this amiable woman — all conſpire to make it neceſſary that you combat with this deſtructive paſſion, and ſee her no more!"

"And who, Sir," cried Aſhton, fiercely, "gave *you* authority to protect *her*, or inſult *me*. — Lady Belinda, I truſt will think this interference much to the honour of your pretended virtue."

To this pointed ſarcaſm, Groveſby replied:

"This interference, my lord, was merely accidental. I had heard a rumour of this lady's being reſtored to that affluence which villainy has long deprived her of — and it was with an intent to enquire into the truth of this matter,

matter that I waited on Mrs. Mountaign, not knowing Miſs Sackville was a reſident here.——May I, Madam," turning to Terentia, "congratulate you on this occaſion."

"You may, Sir," ſhe anſwered, "but if affluence cannot protect me from the lawleſs purſuit of an abandoned libertine, the felicity occaſioned me by ſuch an acquiſition, will be poor indeed!"

Lord Aſhton, petrified at finding her independent—with much embaraſſment ſtammered out:

"Had I known, Madam, the change in your fate, I ſhould moſt certainly have ſpared you this *interview*;—but as my intentions were *then* honourable, I hope you will forgive this intruſion; and ſuffer me, when intitled by the laws of my country to make you an offer of my hand, to viſit you again."

"Have I not always ſhewn the utmoſt averſion to your ill-placed paſſion,

my

my lord;" anſwered Terentia, "how then can you hope for a renewal of an acquaintance which has ſo much injured me in the eyes of the world? All I deſire in return for the injury you have done me, is, a promiſe, that you never again intrude yourſelf into my preſence."

"'Tis well, Madam!" he cried, piqued at the contempt with which ſhe treated him; but as I judge it would be equally diſtreſſing to *delicacy like yours*, to be left alone, at this late hour, with one married man, as another, I ſhall not go alone. Lord Aſhton never yet ſubmitted to an inſult of this kind—and curſe me if your virtuous friend ſhall thus triumph over me with impunity. Remember, Madam, I once more declare that my intentions were honourable.—And now, Sir," turning to Mr. Groveſby, "I am ready to attend you where ever you pleaſe."

The

The fierceneſs of his manner terrified Terentia; the idea of a duel ruſhed into her mind, and racked her with unſpeakable anguiſh. She caught hold of Aſhton, and with all the ſupplicative eloquence in her power, beſought him not to put a final end to her appearance in the world by ſuch an ill-judged proceeding."

While Mr. Groveſby thus anſwered: "I will not, my lord, be diſpleaſed, at what any man, irritated by diſappointment, may ſay; and I have too much regard for the reputation of this lady —and too much diſlike to that very faſhionable thing called *falſe honour*, to be drawn, in cool blood, into an act which the natural dignity of the human mind, *unbiaſſed* by pernicious example, muſt ever ſoar above."

Much more paſſed on the ſubject, but at length his lordſhip was convinced by the ſound reaſoning of his opponent, (whoſe courage, from many inſtances

when

when abroad, could not be doubted) and confuted in that falſe bravery which diſappointment and pique had worked up in his mind—and much to the ſatisfaction of Terentia, they left her not, till contrition had ſo far taken place of rancour and revenge in the mind of Aſhton, as to be productive of a promiſe never more to moleſt her.

When alone, reflection again took poſſeſſion of her mind—but it was not that all ſolacing reflection which ariſes from the far expanded thought of approaching good!—The ſcenes of calm ſunſhine which had before been predominant, *now* grew gloomy—She could no longer trace in idea her future proſpects of domeſtic felicity without a *ſigh*! even the luxury ſhe might taſte from cheering the humble cottager, and his numerous offspring, did not create that elaſtic joy which her ſuſceptible heart had before experienced. In ſhort, the entrance of Groveſby had derang'd

every

every idea, and inſpired her with a wiſh to run from herſelf.

For this purpoſe ſhe aroſe to try the power of muſic, and the following words riſing involuntarily to her lips, ſhe touched the keys and repeated them:

Grant me, juſt heaven, a calm repoſe,
Exempt from folly, ſtrife, and pride;
Where I may pity human woes,
And taſte the pleaſures you provide.

And if I might ſelect a friend
To be the partner of my care,
Let Groveſby this retreat attend,
Whoſe merit does my heart enſnare.

Why was I born to taſte diſtreſs?
Why did I meet ſo kind a friend?
My gratitude has hurt my peace;
And but in death's cold grave will end.

Come, bleſs'd religion, calm my grief,
And help me in this arduous taſk:
Send fortitude to my relief;
Ah! this, Great God! is all I aſk.

She

She had but juſt time to finiſh this ſolo, when the company returned; and finding now that her heart was too little in her own power, even to be capable for more than a friendſhip for Conyers, ſhe would have given her whole fortune to have been free from her preſent engagement. Reſolving, therefore, to reveal its treachery, ſhe related all that had paſſed in his abſence—offered to ſhare her fortune with him as a brother—but contended much for a ſingle life; declaring, that while her preſent prepoſſeſſion remained unconquered—freedom alone could afford her felicity.

To this the whole trio objected—Conyers feared nothing from a want of affection in a boſom where virtue, prudence, juſtice, and humanity, reigned predominant—nor would her friends admit an idea of any dark vieled misfortune ariſing from ſuch an union which was, as they ſaid, as neceſſary to

confute

confute the falſe aſperſion thrown out by lord Aſhton and his ſervants, as it was to that of turning her thoughts from an object on whom ſhe could not *now* think but with criminality.

Overpowered by arguments ſo convincing, and ſtarting at the laſt mentioned apprehenſion, ſhe held out her hand to Mrs. Bryant, and ſaid:

If Mr. Conyers can be happy with this wretched perſon, whoſe mind cannot, all deſerving as he is, ſo far conquer itſelf as to regard him with an eye of affection, I will not farther heſitate —yet blame not theſe tears—they feel like the tribute of departed joy—for ſhould I render ſo worthy a heart as that which glows in the breaſt of my friend unhappy — felicity will never again reach the boſom of Terentia."

The gentle ſoul of Conyers melted at the ſolemnity of a ſpeech which at once ſhewed the goodneſs of her heart, and the little hold he had in her affections —and

—and he was on the point to comply with her deſire in giving her up, when Mr. Mountaign entered, and being informed of lord Aſhton's perſeverance, inſiſted on giving her away the next morning.

To this Terentia gave an abſolute denial — but agreed to be his on the Thurſday in the following week; and as this was Friday evening, the reſt of the interval between that and the hour of reſt, was dedicated to planning the manner of the wedding.

Mrs. Bryant pleaded ſtrongly to have it ſolemnized at Bryant Hall, and Terentia, who wiſhed to have it as private as poſſible joined in the requeſt—it was therefore concluded, that they ſhould reach that place on the Wedneſday evening; and that as ſpring was now returning, the houſe of the late Mr. Hatfield, which Terentia had purchaſed of one of his creditors on the reaſſumption of her fortune, ſhould be put in order

for

for their reception; and that as many of the old ſervants as could be collected, ſhould now be engaged in their former ſtations.

In the midſt of this variety of events, Terentia forgot not to fulfil her promiſe to the old traveller; a little cot, adjacent to her eſtate at Hatfield Grove, ſhe made his future reſidence; and complied with his requeſt in giving him the charge of her poultry, &c.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVIII.

In which an unexpected revolution in the fate of our heroine takes place—and a new character is introduced.

NOTHING material happened till they arrived at Bryant Hall, where Terentia had the ſatisfaction to find many of her faithful domeſtics aſſembled to bid her welcome to the reſidence of her infant years—this grateful tribute of their affection was requited by a preſent of five pounds each, and an order to replace themſelves in their former ſtations.

When ſummoned to breakfaſt the next morning, ſhe was agreeably ſur-

ſurpriſed to find ſeated, ready equipped for the ſacred office, Mr. Fairfax; and on deſiring to know how, in ſo ſhort a time, he could have been able to reach them, he modeſtly replied:

"I come, Madam, by the deſire of my kind patron," looking at Mr. Mountaign, "who, through your kind interpoſition, has made me and my little family happy, by raiſing us above dependance on a man whoſe virtues are not ſo great as his ſituation requires."

He then acquainted her that he was actually in the poſſeſſion of a living which would bring him in three hundred a year.

The eye of Terentia gliſtened with pleaſure at this news, and proudly rejoicing in the thought, that ſhe herſelf was the origin of that joy which beamed in the countenance of ſo worthy a man, —She forgot thoſe tumults which had,

during

during the preceeding night, agitated her diſconſolate ſpirits; and politely thanking Mr. Mountaign for his diligence in this act of humanity, began to ſet about a reſolution to look forward to her future proſpects with a more fervent hope of felicity then ſhe had yet done.

Conyers now entered, joy animated his countenance, and love beamed from his eyes, as he approached the fair arbitreſs of his fate; and on one knee poured forth his gratitude for her kind obligingneſs, as he termed her being ready dreſſed for the ſacred office.

Terentia was about to anſwer when a ſervant entered, and ſaid, a gentleman juſt arrived from the Indies, deſired to ſpeak to her on very particular buſineſs.

She looked her wiſh that Mr. Bryant would accompany her to the ſtudy—He underſtood her meaning and followed.

Conyers changed colour; a ſigh involuntarily eſcaped him—he trembled, yet knew not the reaſon—while the reſt of the company was bewildered in a labyrinth of conjecture, none of which had the leaſt tendency to the real cauſe of this interruption.

When Terentia and Mr. Bryant entered the ſtudy, the ſtranger, who was an elderly gentleman, in the language of haughty authority, demanded if her name was not Sackville?

The force of ſomething, unexperienced before by Terentia, occaſioned by the reſemblance between the ſtranger and the portrait given her by Bankerton, took from her all power of utterance; while Mr. Bryant, leſs concerned becauſe leſs intereſted, anſwered in the affirmative, and begged he would be brief in what he was going to relate, or they ſhould be too late for that ceremony which was to give her to another.

"I am

"I am happy," replied the ſtranger, "that I have arrived in time, or my friend would have been cruelly diſappointed." He then turned to Terentia, and taking her hand, ſaid:

"You will doubtleſs be ſurprized to hear, after the letter *you* received, for I find Mr. Hatfield is no more, that your father yet lives!"—At the word father! Terentia dropt on her knees and burſt into tears!

Mr. Sackville, ſuppoſing that her emotion ſprung rather from diſappoint ment, than any impulſe of filial affection, raiſed her from that poſition,—"No tears, child," he ſaid, "all I deſire of you is, a dutiful acquieſcence to my will.—I will have no ſon-in-law but one of my own chuſing. This gentleman has given me to underſtand that you are going to fling yourſelf away;—but mark me, Terentia, I will be obeyed!"

Mr. Bryant now began to plead in favour of Mr. Conyers, but the old gentleman interrupted him by saying:

"Sir you are not unacquainted, I presume, that every father has a right to dispose of his own children——"

Terentia here interrupted him, by expatiating on the paternal kindness she had received from Mr. Bryant, and with a fresh shower of tears, besought her father to treat him as her dearest friend!

"I have no inclination," he answered, "to be at variance with any of your friends, child,—but on the contrary, will requite their hospitality. But your present connection must be broken off! I have given that word which I never yet forfeited!"

Mr. Bryant then briefly related the state of Terentia's mind with regard to Grovesby, after which he observed, that her only chance of happiness in the

married

married ſtate, was to give her hand to one, whoſe ardent affection, and gentleneſs of manners, could not fail of gaining her eſteem—and that Mr. Conyers, whoſe family and character rendered him an object worthy of a connection with the firſt families in England, was in his opinion much more likely to make her happy, than a ſtranger.

"I am not," ſaid Mr. Sackville, "much uſed to conteſt, Sir; Mr. Conyers may be a worthy man, but were he a prince, he ſhould not have my daughter!"

"But you will not force my inclinations, Sir," cried Terentia, "if, when I ſee your friend, I cannot love him."

"You have no right," he replied, "to have any inclination to force—it is indelicate for a girl like you to mention ſuch a forward expreſſion.—Your mother had, I believe, little inclination to me, and yet we were tolerably happy

—She was a woman of ſenſe, and knew her duty.—If I had not quite ſo much affection as I could have wiſhed—every deſire of my heart was gratified, through *fear*; and that, let me tell you, Sir," turning to Mr. Bryant, "is, for any thing I know, the moſt deſirable property in a wife."

Terentia began from this ſpecimen of a father's diſpoſition, to wiſh ſhe had actually been the wife of Conyers, before his arrival; and Mr. Bryant, quite diſguſted with his manner, ſincerely regretted that recovery which the captain deſpaired of—and which was the reaſon why the ſuppoſed poſthumous letter, mentioned by Bankerton, had been forwarded to England.

Mr. Conyers was now ſent for, and Mr. Bryant, in as gentle a manner as friendſhip could dictate, diſcloſed the turn which the arrival of Mr. Sackville had given to his fate!

He

He was much hurt; and with all the energy which the moſt ardent affection had inſpired, pleaded the ſtrength of his paſſion to the old gentleman——but he pleaded in vain!

Mr. Sackville, though by no means a perfect character, was poſſeſſed of ſome excellent qualities; among which, was a ſteady adherence to keeping his word ſacred; and as that word was given to a friend, whom he thought it impoſſible for any woman to diſlike—all that he would condeſcend to ſay was, "Sir, I am not uſed to *conteſt*, I will be obeyed."

Mr. Conyers lamented an interruption ſo deſtructive to his future hopes of felicity—but finding it abſolutely neceſſary, he called forth that philoſophy to his aid which ever diſtinguiſhes the man of virtue, when ſupported by the rock of religion, from the vain unprincipled coxcomb, whoſe pride cannot ſtand the teſt of diſap-

pointment, and with more compoſure than could be expected, after leaving Terentia his beſt wiſhes, he took leave of a place, which, a few hours before, had promiſed him an age of bliſs! in order to viſit Mr. Burdet, before he ſet off for the Continent, to which place he determined to go—nor would he ſuffer himſelf to write even to Groveſby, an account of this cruel diſappointment, though he had apprized him of his intended nuptials.

Terentia was not more happy — ſhe dreaded the authority of a father— and the loſs of that friendly council which had ever flown from the heart of the friendly Mrs. Bryant — who, ſhe ſuppoſed, would now conſign her up to a parent, though it was evident they were by no means ſatisfied with his tyrannical introduction.

The day was ſpent in rehearſing ſome of the moſt material incidents of each others life; and Mr. Sackville, after being

being convinced of the obligations received from the friends of Terentia, made reſtitution by ſuch valuable preſents, as convinced them he was in the poſſeſſion of an immenſity of wealth; and that whether it *aroſe* from a liberality of principle, or a propenſity to oſtentation, he was far from ungenerous.

In the courſe of the evening he aſſured Terentia, that the twenty thouſand pounds ſhe had already received ſhould continue her own, on condition ſhe diſapproved not of the man whom he had ſelected for her future huſband; and Terentia, who began to receive a more favourable opinion of her parent than his behavour at firſt had given her reaſon to ſuppoſe he merited, promiſed to obey his commands.

In a week Mr. and Mrs. Mountaign left them, to go to their country ſeat—Mr. Fairfax having before that period, left his kind benefactor to take poſſeſ-

ſion of his new living, which was not more than thirty miles diſtance from Hatfield Grove, and which Terentia and her father had promiſed, in company with the Bryants, to ſee before the ſummer was expired.—

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXIII.

A freſh inſtance of paternal authority.

MR. Sackville now took poſſeſſion of the houſe of his late friend; and ſuffered the arrangement made by him to remain unaltered, except by the addition of three black ſervants, and another of gold lace, and tags inſtead of worſted to the liveries already beſpoke.

An interim of three months had paſſed without event; during which Terentia often regretted that the ſplendor with which ſhe was now ſurrounded, had not been hers at the time Groveſby firſt honoured her with his notice.—When one day as they were at dinner,

ſhe

ſhe was deſired by her father to prepare for the reception of her future huſband; who, he expected, would be at the grove within the preſent week; and who he declared ſhould be his ſon within three days after his arrival.

A declaration ſo arbitrary, diſordered every faculty of the trembling Terentia, who ventured again to intreat him not to render her wretched by forcing her inclinations; if, on a knowledge of his friend, ſhe found him repugnant to her taſte.

—"I have ſet my heart on this union," he cried, "and whether or no your taſte and mine agree, I ſhall hold myſelf bound, both in honour and gratitude, to perform a promiſe made to merit ſo truly deſerving.—So no whining, girl, but prepare to be obedient, or you have no longer a father in me."

He ſtaid not for an anſwer, but with majeſtic ſtalk left her to think, and to be wretched.

From

From this unpleaſing reverie, ſhe was rouſed by the entrance of Mrs. Bryant, who came to invite her to walk.—The ſight of ſo dear a friend added freſh ſoftneſs to her already depreſſed ſpirits, and flinging her arms round her neck, ſhe ſobbed out, "O deareſt madam, what can I do; my father's friend will be here in a few days, and I muſt either bind myſelf in a chain of wretchedneſs, or, as he has juſt aſſured me, give up all dependance on his paternal protection.—Adviſe me, my ever kind monitreſs how to act with rectitude—yet keep clear from a bondage which my ſoul recoils at.

"Be calm, my love," replied Mrs. Bryant, "till you ſee what reaſon you have for this terror—*ſufficient to the day is the evil thereof*; this much dreaded huſband may, for any thing you know, be worthy your regard.—Give not a parent reaſon to ſuſpect that ſelf-will alone directs you. If when you ſee him, and

he

he really is deſtitute of thoſe eſſentials which are neceſſary to make you happy, I will, myſelf undertake to plead for you—till then let not cruel anxiety ſo mark your countenance.

Senſible of the juſtneſs of her reaſoning, and calmed by her kind promiſe, Terentia, aſſured her friend ſhe would endeavour to ſuſpend her grief; and when Mr. Sackville returned, which was ſoon after, ſhe received him with a tranquil aſpect. But he appeared ſeriouſly diſpleaſed—on his brow hung that ſullen ſterneſs, which ever diſtinguiſhes an arbitrary power when in conteſt with an inferior object: and during the time he ſtaid in the room, he directed his diſcourſe to Mrs. Bryant, nor once noticed the efforts of Terentia on every little occaſion to regain his loſt favour; and when intreated to walk in the fields, he only anſwered with determined energy, "I chuſe to be alone."

It was now the latter end of June,

and

and the field in which they walked yielded a delightful proſpect; mountains whoſe riſing eminence caught new beauties from the humbler dales, and meadows interſperſed with woodlands, far as the expanded ſight could reach, attracted the high ſoaring eye of humanity, nor ſuffered it here to reſt; it turned the ſoul as it were into a ſtate of wonder and admiration, and gave a topic for a converſation on the ſublimity of its author.

They had rambled near a mile from the houſe, and had juſt got within view of the road, when their attention was attracted by a pompous funeral proceſſion; and Mrs. Bryant exclaimed great God! the arms on the ſtate coach are Sir Paulet Groveſby's! how ſtrange ſhe added, that Mr. Bryant has never been apprized of his illneſs! but perhaps an appoplectic fit has taken him off.

As this event had happened too late to ſave Terentia the pangs which attend-

ed

ed an ill placed paſſion—it required little philoſophy to obſerve it without perturbation; and ſhe only felt a momentary regret on the reflection that the Bryants might loſe their preſent dependance; that fear was, however, ſoon obliterated by the riſing hope that her father's gratitude and generoſity would both be engaged on ſuch an occaſion, to ſupport thoſe benevolent worthies who had long ſince ſnatched her from the impending horror of poverty.

During their return Mrs. Bryant appeared penſive, and ſtaid no longer at the grove than to take leave of Mr. Sackville; and Terentia ſuſpecting the cauſe of her diſquiet, promiſed to call on her the next morning, and took the firſt opportunity to hint the hopes which ſprung from the goodneſs of her own heart, in order to find out if they were built on a ſolid foundation. In this, however, ſhe was diſappointed, for Mr. Sackville only anſwered, that unleſs ſhe

would

would promiſe to oblige him in the point on which he had ſet his heart, he ſhould hold her unworthy of any favour in his power to grant.

Alarmed beyond expreſſion at a manner ſo repulſive, ſhe burſt into tears, and retired to her room; where, during the reſt of the evening (for ſhe was not deſired to appear) ſhe reflected on the mutability of human felicity, and condemned the tyrannical cuſtom of the Indies, as the cauſe of all that faſtidiouſneſs which appeared to be the ruling characteriſtic of a father whom ſhe wiſhed to honour.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A visit from 'Squire Onset—his remarks during his journey to the Continent—with the arrival of a stranger.

THE next morning she sent the maid with her duty, desiring to know if she might be permitted to make her father's breakfast; and received for answer, "that she might attend him."

She accordingly went down, and on enquiring how he had rested a second time, he answered;

"If you regarded my health, Terentia, you would pay implicit obedience to my will; all pretention to affection are insults on the understanding when that is wanting."

She

She was about to anſwer, when the ſervant announced 'ſquire Onſet; who, followed by his two hounds as uſual, blundered into the room, and very familiarly ſhook hands with Terentia, apologizing for his not ſeeing her ſooner, by ſaying he had for the laſt four months had a little tour, and in his return home had juſt touched on the continent.

While Mr. Sackville ſuppoſing him an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Hatfield's, endeavoured to ſhake off his anger by entering into a converſation with him:

"How do you like France, Sir?" was the introducing queſtion.

"Not at all, Sir," anſwered the 'ſquire, "I would rather cut up my hounds than partake of a Frenchman's table; their diſhes are all ſo oil'd, vinegar'd, and garlick'd, that I never enjoy'd a good meal from the time I left England, to the time I returned to it again.

again. Aunt Tabitha ſays I am grown as thin as a hurdle.

"But ſurely, Sir, if you had required it, you might have had ſomething cooked to your own taſte; the French are too polite a people not to wiſh to accommodate ſtrangers in ſuch trifling particulars."

"Sir, you are much miſtaken; a French cook is ſo tenacious of his knowledge in thoſe matters, that was you to give him ten times the worth of a veal or lamb chop to have it done in the Engliſh mode, he would not omit what he calls the delicious flavour of his favourite garlick, and this for the honour of that taſte on which they ſo much pride themſelves.

"This is amazing!" anſwered Mr. Sackville, "I thought eaſe and freedom, ſo much the characteriſtic of that nation, that you had but to ſignify your deſire to be accommodated with whatever you wiſhed to attain."

"Quite

"Quite the reverſe, I aſſure you," cried the 'ſquire; "I deſired to have an Engliſh knife and fork to eat my dinner with, but was obliged to ſet down with a knife only, and that with a point as narrow as the tip end of a tea-ſpoon.—D—me if I had half ſatisfied the cravings of an empty ſtomach, before every thing ſolid was diſcharged from the table.

The Eaſt Indian ſmiled, and the 'ſquire proceeded:

"Your ideas of eaſe and politeneſs are quite erroneous—they are as bigotted to their faſhions, as a hound to his ſcent. Even a hair dreſſer ſcorns to diſgrace himſelf by deviating from the taſte of his nation—for though I offered him half a crown to let my head remain in our Engliſh mode—he turned ſhort on his heel, and with all the grimace of his country, told me, I could not be indulged in ſo uncouth a requeſt, without his eternal diſgrace!"

Mr.

Mr. Sackville now enquired concerning the city of Paris, and its police?

But the ideas of the 'ſquire, which ſeldom extended beyond hunting, eating, and drinking, had been ſo deeply engaged in the diſappointments he had that way met with, that the buildings the police, the government, and, in ſhort, every obſervation requiſite to the improvement of knowledge in a traveller, had, by him, paſſed unnoticed; and he was now timely relieved from an anſwer which would have diſcovered as much, by a poſt chaiſe entering the yard, which cauſed Mr. Sackville to exclaim, "Oh! he is come! Henry, the preſerver of my life is at laſt arrived!" At which words he haſtiy left the room, and flew to embrace the ſtranger.

He ſoon returned, and with him a very handſome youth, who appeared to be about eighteen—a pleaſing ſweetneſs

blended

blended with gravity was visible in his countenance, while an air of serenity, intermixed with diffidence, rendered him a much less alarming object than the fears of Terentia had suggested him to be—and instilled into her mind the pleasing idea of his being incapable of coinciding with the tyranny of her father, when he found his addresses were repugnant to her wish.

The 'squire soon departed, and Terentia was about to leave the room, in order to give directions for the day, when Mr. Sackville, with his usual sternness forbade her going till she had given him her word to be obedient to his wish in being the wife of his friend.

Her heart recoiled at the idea; and prompted by the dread of future misery, she with more spirit than he thought her possessed of, answered:

"Honour impels me, Sir, to assure your friend, that however deserving he

may be—and however I may wiſh to pleaſe the author of my being—my affections are not in my power!—I have no heart to give!—and if, as my mind protends, he is poſſeſſed of that true greatneſs of mind which diſtinguiſhes the man of generous principles from the mercenary pretender to affection, he will ſcorn to accept my hand on terms ſo deſtructive to my peace!

Mr. Sackville, with the looks of a fury, deſired Henry to have a good heart—for that he ſhould not be diſappointed—and added: "the world is come to a fine paſs, indeed, if ſuch a girl as this, is thus openly to defy a father's command!"

While the ſtranger, with looks of compaſſion, made ſome apologies for the affliction which he had occaſioned her, and added: "However I may regret the diſappointment, Madam, on which perhaps depended my every future good—I have a ſoul too great to

accept

accept the hand of a princeſs, where freedom of choice is wanting to inſure felicity!"

A riſing ſtorm had been gathering in the mind of Mr. Sackville, from the moment Terentia had expreſſed herſelf ſo contrary to his inclinations—pride, on an anſwer at once ſo galling to the hopes he had built in carrying his point—now augmented to the whirlwind: he ſtamped, ſwore, and inſiſted that he would be obeyed—or, that he would for ever renounce a daughter who deſerved not his protection!—and, leaving the room, told them he ſhould return again in an hour, and ſhould then expect her final anſwer.

The ſtranger now deſired Terentia would be calm—aſſuring her ſhe had nothing to fear on his account; that he would, to prevent her from farther ill-treatment, inſtantly leave that part of the world, and endeavour to find out ſome

near and dear friends, who, he hoped, yet exiſted.

Terentia, who had already conceived a friendſhip for a perſon who appeared to be poſſeſſed of every good quality which conſtitutes a worthy character, almoſt repented ſhe could not regard him with the eye of affection—and ſignified her deſire to learn the particulars of his fortune, during his reſidence in India; particularly that period in which he had ſaved her father's life!

Henry anſwered, that being ſhipwrecked about five years ſince, in company with an uncle who had undertaken the care of him, and who had periſhed in the ſtorm — while the waves had waſhed him on an iſland near the reſidence of Mr. Sackville, he had been diſcovered by ſome of that gentleman's ſervants, who had repaired thither on obſerving the wreck: that on being preſented to him he appeared much pleaſed

pleaſed with him—and took him to attend on his perſon—that by his aſſiduity to make himſelf uſeful, he had gained the eſteem and friendſhip of his kind benefactor, who had long treated him as his ſon—that on being out one day on a ſailing party, a ſquall of wind overſet their veſſel, and that at the hazard of his own life he had ſaved that of his friend! that in return, Mr. Sackville had promiſed to make him all the reſtitution in his power, by giving him his daughter in marriage, on his return to England—"but," added he, "I ſhould ill deſerve the friendſhip I have experienced from ſo kind a benefactor, could I *now* be ungrateful enough to render that daughter wretched."

"And I," ſaid Terentia, "ſhould ill requite ſuch diſintereſted behaviour, if I ſuffered you, through *me*, to loſe that grateful friendſhip which you have ſo juſtly merited.—No! I will on his return appear to acquieſce in his deſires

—let him ſuppoſe I favour your ſuit—by that means we ſhall gain time to fall into ſome meaſure to ſoften that rigour which terrifies me more than I can expreſs!—As a brother, how could I value the diſtinguiſhed friend of my father!"

"And how!" cried the ſtranger, "could I revere a ſoul ſo great!—Why did I not know you ſooner—or, why know you at all! But to favour our ſcheme, I will, to-morrow, ſet out in ſearch of my friends; I left them in the farthermoſt part of the weſt of England—Should I find them living—how will they regret among the many contingencies of my life, a diſappointment which has deprived them of ſuch a daughter!—but I have done—you ſhall find, Madam, that misfortunes have taught me philoſophy!"

"'Tis a matter of wonder," ſaid Terentia, wiſhing to turn the ſubject of philoſophy to ſomething leſs intereſting, "that during the term of five years, you never

never have heard any account of your friends!—Yet why do I wonder? it is a long time ſince we had any news of my father!—indeed we thought him no more!"

"Mr. Sackville," ſaid Henry, "dreading, as he was pleaſed to ſay, a ſeparation; would never ſuffer me to let them know I was ſtill alive! always alledging that as they muſt long before any letter from me could have arrived, have heard of the loſs of our ſhip, the idea of my ſtill exiſting, without the means of a ſupport, would only add to their grief: whereas their concluding me no more! though it might be productive of preſent affliction, yet it would exempt them from future miſery!"

"Terentia now recollecting that his name was yet unknown to her — enquired by what name ſhe ſhould call her brother!

The ſtranger, with a look which at once indicated pleaſure and regret, was

about to anſwer—when the return of Mr. Sackville chained his tongue, by his aſking in a voice of tyranny—If he had yet a daughter?

"You have an angel! Sir," cried Henry; "but let me intreat you to lay aſide all auſterity to a child who wiſhes to oblige you—though ſhe thinks a little time neceſſary to make obſervations on a character which you, Sir, are perhaps too partial to."

"If this is the caſe," anſwered Mr. Sackville, "I am eaſy—yet I think it a little extraordinary that my judgment is to be ſuppoſed exceptionable. But come, Terentia, holding out his hand—let me know when I am to keep open houſe, for I am determined to celebrate your nuptials with all the pomp of the Eaſt!—not a creature within five miles of the village but ſhall remember the day that bleſſes me with the ſon of my choice!"

Henry bowed, while a bluſh of duplicity overſpread the face of Terentia

—and

—and inſtantly recollecting her appointment with Mrs. Bryant, ſhe pleaded that, as an excuſe to withdraw —— while Mr. Sackville obſerved,—that the delicacy of the Engliſh ladies was equally troubleſome to the forwardneſs of thoſe of other countries—and added, "I ſuppoſe ſhe will expect to keep you in ſuſpence for a twelvemonth if I don't interfere, but depend upon it ſhe ſhall be yours in a month."

Henry thanked him for his well-meant kindneſs—after which he propoſed the next day to ſet out on his journey to the Weſt.

Mr. Sackville could very well have excuſed this journey—being ſo ſelfiſh in the love of Henry, as to dread, leſt the affection of his parents ſhould leſſen the eſteem which the youth had always ſhown for himſelf; but a meeting could not now be prevented; and he acquieſced in his wiſh, though not without aſſuring him he ſhould be extremely

jealous if he ſtaid above a week—beſides, he added, I muſt firſt introduce you to our neighbours; they will, I am certain, be proud of having the honour of your acquaintance."

He then aſked him if he had any objection to a walk, as he wanted to ſhew him ſome improvements which he was making on an eſtate he had juſt purchaſed.

Henry agreed: and they ſallied forth into the ſame field where Terentia and Mrs. Bryant had walked the evening before; after which they went to the place appointed; and laſtly, Mr. Sackville propoſed taking him to Mr. Bryant's, to whom, he ſaid, he had been under great obligations on Terentia's account.

In returning from the building, they croſſed the poultry yard, where Terentia's old traveller was buſy in feeding his feathered community. Mr. Sackville having acquainted Henry with the

manner

manner of their first introduction, and what followed; the youth turned to the old veteran:

"You are, indeed," he said, "happy, to be the care of youth, beauty, and wisdom, at an age so great—I could almost wish to leap through my prime of life to be so noticed!"

"All in good time," answered Mr. Sackville; "I dare say you would be wonderfully sorry to change situations with this good old man a month hence."

Henry sighed! and the old man said:

"Indeed, Gentlemen, I enjoy more happiness than a sovereign prince! as my subjects here," pointing to the poultry, "unlearned in deceit—will form no plots or stratagems to betray me!—nor will dark-minded faction wound my peace!——No!—Free from the idea of soaring to be my equal—or indulging the ungrateful wish of disput-

ing my will—that gratitude which inſtinct implants in all—but which deep-rooted error and upſtart pride, in too many of the human race, has totally diſpelled, now ſtands confeſſed in their geſtures—as, attentive to my call, they ruſh in promiſcuous crouds to taſte my daily bounty.

CHAPTER XXIV.

An agreeable diſcovery.

TERENTIA found Mrs. Bryant in the parlour; on her entrance, ſhe ſtarted—"My dear girl, I am happy to ſee you," ſhe ſaid, "though, I own, I am a little diſappointed, as I thought it was Mr. Bryant, who has been gone ſince five in the morning, to learn the particulars of Sir Paulet's death. — How very unfortunate, my dear Terentia, is this event!"

"Let not, deareſt Madam, the loſs of this friend diſtreſs you," ſaid Terentia, tenderly wiping away the fal-

ling tear—which on the dread idea of being again deſtitute, had ſtarted unbidden from her eye—"is not your orphan dependant, now in the poſſeſſion of affluence? believe me, ſuch is the real affection which I bear you—that to be deprived the power of rendering the eve of your life happy, would exempt me from every real felicity! but come," ſhe continued, "you muſt rejoice with your daughter on her deliverance from that chain of dark thoughts which yeſterday oppreſſed her ——She then acquainted her with the arrival of the ſtranger, and with his generous acquieſcence with her wiſhes.

Mrs. Bryant ſmiled through her tears—and told her he had taken the only method to enſure her gratitude—"which," added ſhe, "to a mind like my Terentia's, is often productive of a more tender paſſion."

"Shall I own," anſwered Terentia, "there is ſomething in the manner of

my

my father's friend, that I am exceedingly interested in, and which makes me regret I cannot love him. Why did the form of Grovesby banish, as it has done, every hope of future felicity in this unhappy bosom."

A thundering rap at the door now informed them that some visitors were entering. Mrs. Bryant breathed on her hand in order to dispel the redness from her eyes, and Terentia began to recollect her gloves were rather soiled, when her father and the young stranger entered.

Mrs. Bryant no sooner raised her eyes to bid them welcome, than she screamed aloud, and fell senseless on the floor—while Henry flew to her assistance, and in a transport of fearful joy, cried, "It is—it is my mother!"

A consciousness of my inability to describe it, prompts me to leave to my readers' imagination what passed in the bosom of Mrs. Bryant on her recovery;

—suffice

—ſuffice it to ſay, it would have been a good ſubject for the pencil of a Reynolds, to trace with its inimitable colourings, the various emotions of ſurpriſe, doubt, and joy, which at once animated her countenance on a diſcovery ſo grateful to her fond heart;

While Terentia, leſs intereſted, experienced ſenſations equally pleaſing, though unattended with that acuteneſs of joy which makes even pleaſure painful.

In the breaſt of Mr. Sackville far different emotions aroſe—he blamed himſelf for having from ſelfiſh views detained a ſon of ſuch merit, from parents ſo worthy—and convinced of the ill-conſequences which ſuch a proceeding might have been productive of, he reſolved, if poſſible, to eraſe it from their memory, by inveſting them with a large ſhare of his fortune, the whole of which amounted to little leſs than two hundred thouſand pounds.

The

The only anxiety which remained on the mind of Mrs. Bryant, was, how to inform the worthy partner of her heart of an acquiſition which, from the abruptneſs of the interview, had nearly proved dangerous to her intellectual faculties.

There was, however, no time to conſider of a method leſs alarming, for while they were planning a ſcheme for that purpoſe, he entered, and with looks of love, whiſpered Terentia,—that the wheel of Fate ſeemed turning in her favour.

Terentia, thinking this ſpeech had its origin from the faſcinating appearance of the ſtranger, anſwered:

"I believe I can return you the pleaſing compliment, for I aſſure you, I have the ſtrangeſt intelligence to communicate.—"

"Oh! oh!" interrupted Mr. Bryant, ſuppoſing ſhe had heard of the miſtake made by Mrs. Bryant, with regard to

the

the funeral of Sir Paulet (which in fact, was no other than that of lady Belinda, who, having caught cold, by ſetting too long under the hands of the hair dreſſer, after a violent fever with which ſhe had been attacked) "you are, I truſt then, at no loſs to find out my enigma!"

"Really, Sir," ſaid Terentia, a little ſurpriſed, "I am not proficient enough in the art of divination, to underſtand your meaning!"

—Mr. Bryant had, during Terentia's anſwer, fixed his eyes on the ſtranger—and Mr. Sackville, whoſe heart ſmote him for the part he had acted, and who anxiouſly wiſhed to appriſe him of the arrival of his ſon, now ſaid:

"Can you forgive me, my friend! for thus long depriving you of the ſociety of ſuch a child! at a time too, when your generoſity ſupported and protected *mine* from the hand of adverſity — the narrowneſs of my conduct appears,

appears, at this moment in such unnatural colours, I shall never again think myself your equal—never rest, till by a conduct less interested—I convince you I am not quite unworthy of your friendship."

Henry now fell on his knees—while Mr. Bryant exclaimed—"Great God! is it possible!—Do I again embrace my child!—By what strange Providence hast thou been preserved, and what strange reverse of fate has thus long withheld thee from my arms?"

An eclaircissement now took place—and Mr. Bryant, reflecting on the fatherly part which Mr. Sackville had acted towards his much loved fugitive, and justly esteeming favours which, in the end, had proved so conducive to his happiness—though regretting the intricacy which marked the manner of conferring them, nobly forgave the pangs he had suffered (in supposing him no more!) and embraced in perfect harmony the future friend of his heart;

Who,

Who, to the utter confuſion of Terentia, now propoſed that the next day's ſun ſhould witneſs the nuptials of his children; adding, that until that event, which had long been the firſt wiſh of his heart, was accompliſhed, his joy would be incomplete.

Mr. Bryant looked on his ſon with an intent to develope the inmoſt receſſes of his heart; but Henry, too noble to prefer his own happineſs to that of Terentia, betrayed not that extreme joy which he had expected to find expreſſive in his countenance; and to the ſurpriſe of the two gentlemen, he anſwered:

"However gratified my utmoſt wiſhes would be by an union ſo much beyond either my deſerts or expectations both in point of perſonal perfections and intellectual endowments, I muſt now, and, I hope," turning to Mr. Sackville, "without increaſing the diſpleaſure of my beſt friend, declare—that

that I never will accept ſo deſirable a treaſure, on terms leſs eſſential to felicity, than that of an union of hearts!"

"Noble minded youth!" cried Terentia, "thou art indeed deſerving of more felicity than ſuch a bankrupt as myſelf can bring you—may you be happy, whatever is the fate of Terentia!

A glow of ſatisfaction overſpread the face of Mr. Bryant, from a declaration ſo agreeable to his wiſh—while ſurpriſe, anger, and contempt, ſtood boldly deſcriptive in the countenance of Mr. Sackville.

"What!" cried he, "How!—Did you not tell me, my daughter would be dutiful?—I will have no child who prefers the gratification of ſelf-will, to that of preſerving my peace!—I will give every ſhilling I am worth to charitable uſes—if the child of my heart thus turns againſt her father!"

—"Self-will, my ever honoured Sir," cried Terentia, "is not the cauſe of my diſobedience—

diſobedience—a more fatal obſtacle will not ſuffer me to render ſo much worth, as ſtands confeſſed in this your friend, miſerable!—for unleſs *the reign of my affections was lent me*, to render the journey through that *road of care* bliſsful; of what can I aſſure him but a certainty of wretchedneſs!"

Mr. Bryant now took Mr. Sackville by the arm, and begged he would accompany him to his ſtudy, having ſomething (as he ſaid) to communicate, in which he was much intereſted; and Terentia took that opportunity to return home, but not before ſhe had invited the Bryants to dinner.

The day paſſed in a reciprocal rehearſal of the incidents of the Bryants, during the long abſence of Henry, and the reaſon of their removal from the Weſt of England.

Mrs. Bryant took the firſt opportunity, which happened not till late in the evening, to acquaint Terentia with the change

change in the Groveſby family, and added, that Mr. Bryant had, and ſhe hoped with ſome ſucceſs, communicated this intelligence to her father, who, though not fully convinced of the impropriety of her marrying Henry, or ſatisfied with giving up his favourite ſcheme, appeared not ſo very ſtrenuous for an immediate union as he had heretofore been.

When retired for the night, Terentia, freed from the dread of perſecution, gave way to ſenſations of a different kind; though, perhaps, not leſs painful —The grateful intercourſe of mutual affection, at one moment glided through her raiſed imagination—while the next preſented the haughty ſpirit of her father, claſhing with the equally proud though more mercenary one of Sir Paulet. Even Groveſby might ere this have converted his regard into diſlike—or the rumour of her marriage with Conyers,

Conyers, might have eraſed her entirely from his mind.

In this reverie of anxious fear, ſhe was interrupted by her maid, who, on entering her room, exclaimed:

"Mercy on us, Ma'am, how ſtrangly things are come about—I dare ſay Mr. and Mrs. Bryant were never ſo happy in their lives—nay, well they may, for I have never ſeen ſo handſome a man—and then; he is ſo good-natured, there is not the leaſt fear but he will make a charming huſband—Mungo ſays, that the Indians love him better than they do opium."

"The Indians," anſwered Terentia, vexed at her intruſion, "are not more partial to that deſtructive deſpoiler of ſenſibility, than thou to the muſic of thy own tongue."

"Nay, Ma'am, I only repeat his own words; but for that matter, Mungo has talked of nobody elſe, ſince his arrival; though, to be ſure, ſervants have no

right

right to trouble their betters with the low chit chat of the kitchen, and if you don't like him, to be sure it signifies nothing Master's being so *obstropulous.*"

"Every body!" reiterated Terentia (impressed with the idea of Grovesby's being made acquainted with the rumour) "I charge you on pain of my displeasure, never to mention or suffer any one else to divulge this my father's intention of giving me to Mr. Bryant, for most certainly I shall never be his."

"Oh! Ma'am, as to that," she answered, "you may depend on my being as silent as night; for I am sure if you don't like him, it is cruel in Master to be so urgent—for as to fortune, every body knows Mr. Bryant can't give him nothing; and as to himself, why he had not a second coat to his back when Master found him just dead for want—

Indeed, when one comes to think of the matter, and conſider all things—I think it a piece of aſſurance to aſpire to your ladyſhip at all!—Mongo ſays, that Maſter is as rich as a Nabob! and that he has got as many *diamonds* as will buy both houſes of parliament! and for that matter—I ſaid as ſoon as I ſaw him, that Mr. Conyers was a thouſand times handſomer!—I am ſure every body was ſorry when Maſter came and parted you."

"Whatever may be my reaſon for diſapproving Mr. Bryant for a huſband," ſaid Terentia, "I will not allow any one to reflect on my father's friend.—He is the moſt generous, moſt amiable, moſt accompliſhed of men; and would do honour to a much more exalted ſtation than any in which I could place him!"

The girl having no idea that panegyric, like the foregoing, could be dictated

tated by any thing leſs than the tender paſſion, anſwered:

"Nay, Ma'am, every young lady has a right to have *two opinions*; if I was a gentlewoman myſelf, and had a mind to be ſecret in my affairs, I would never let my right hand know what my left did —and certainly, every body may ſee Mr. Bryant is a gentleman — for as to dignity of manners (as Thomas ſays) there is hardly his equal. Mr. Conyers, to be ſure is very handſome—but then Mr. Bryant beats him all to nothing, with regard to air and the like—but as to what I hear and ſee, I would rather die than divulge it."

"Well," ſaid Terentia, tired of her jargon, "you may now leave me; I wiſh to be alone, and will diſpenſe with your further aſſiſtance."

The next morning a new alarm took poſſeſſion of her ſpirits by a note from Mr. Bryant, with an account that his

beloved wife (to whom the ſurpriſe of the preceding day, would, he feared, prove fatal) was dangerouſly ill, and begged to ſee her immediately.

She was met at the door by the diſconſolate Mr. Bryant — "Alas! my amiable friend, how ſhort is ſublunary bliſs—how happy did I yeſterday think myſelf—and how wide is the compaſs of this day's miſery!"

His terrors were, however, in ſome meaſure groundleſs, for though the delicacy of her conſtitution ſuffered much from this unexpected ſurpriſe—yet, at the period of three weeks, ſhe was ſo far recovered as to be thought able to undertake a journey to receive the benefit of a different air, which her phyſician had ordered, as the only thing now neceſſary to eſtabliſh her health.

For this purpoſe, Mr. Sackville propoſed viſiting a maiden relation of his — and, in a few days, after giving a ſtrict charge to her ſervant to convey

any

any meſſage which might arrive from Groveſby to the ſeat of Miſs Stapleton, (the lady whom they were going to viſit) Terentia, in company with her friends, left Hatfield Grove, for the ſtill more beautiful proſpects of South Wales.

CHAPTER XXV.

A rencontre.

DURING this excurſion of the Sackville family, Mr. Groveſby was attending his father, who had been ill; and was now, by order of his phyſicians, trying the Briſtol hot wells.

Miſs Muſgrove, who was with them at the time of Lady Belinda's death, and who, merely to gratify a deſire of captivating our new made widower, had feigned a ſtomachic complaint, was alſo of the party.

It has already been obſerved that Mr. Conyers had communicated his intended marriage to Groveſby; but as Mrs. Mountaign

Mountaign did not return to London, but went immediately into the furthermoſt parts of H———ſhire, and as Mr. Conyers had long ſince left England, too much depreſſed to give even his deareſt friends the reaſon, he was an entire ſtranger to her real ſituation.

Miſs Muſgrove, anxious to gain the eſteem of the object of her adoration, watched every turn in his countenance; and if at any time a ſigh eſcaped him, ſhe had always ſome expedient at hand to intercept the gloom of progreſſive thought. She would perſuade him to walk—or propoſe a ride—or offer to attend him to the rooms: in ſhort, by thus conſtantly experiencing, her deſire to give pleaſure, his gratitude became engaged; and though he was cautious in giving her reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe had any aſcendancy over his heart, yet his behaviour at times bordered ſo much on that of true friendſhip, that her ſanguine hope of ſucceeding began now

to gain ground, and the idea of figuring away in the character of Mrs. Groveſby, was of all others the moſt predominant.

Ignorant, therefore, of her being at liberty, and encompaſſed with the intangling ſnares of another woman, it is not a matter of much ſurpriſe that Terentia engaged little of his thoughts. His father's determination to render him wretched, had taught him to ſtruggle with his paſſion; and the ſuppoſition that ſhe was now another's, had fortified him in this reſolution.

Far differently were the thoughts of Terentia employed; in anxious expectation and cruel diſappointment, ſhe had paſſed a whole month without once hearing from the object of her conſtant thought; but then recollecting that Groveſby, ever actuated by the principle of rectitude, from prudential reaſons might defer his ſeeing her, ſhe bluſhed at the *incongruity* of her expectations, and became, though not leſs earneſt in her

her hope of being beloved by the only man who could render her happy; yet leſs ſanguine with regard to the aſſurance that ſhe was ſo.

Miſs Stapleton did not contribute much to the enlivening the party, as that lady prided herſelf too much on the character of a devotee, to enter into any amuſements wherein the mind might relax from care; a conſtant ſucceſſion of devout exerciſes, which on no occaſion whatever could be diſpenſed with, took up at leaſt half the day; if it rained, ſhe flew to her cloſet to pray for fine weather, that the hay might not be damaged: if a few days funſhine bleſſed the labour of the huſbandman, ſhe inſtantly dreaded the loſs of the afterfeed, obſerving it was turning brown for want of an heavenly ſhower; nor could ſhe reſt till ſhe had aſked of Providence what ſhe was convinced was ſo very neceſſary to the exiſtence of the lowing herds. On Mr. Bryant's once

aſking her if ſhe did not think it preſumptuous to pray for particular bleſſings, *as ſhe might think them?* She anſwered, with all the conſequence of a Phariſaical boaſter, that,

"The elected people of God could not but do the thing that was *right!*"

In ſhort, by an oſtentation which is by no means conſiſtent with true piety, ſhe rendered herſelf ſuſpicious to the judicious eye, and the more ſo, as her charity on many occaſions had ſhown itſelf to be very confined.

Mr. Sackville, after ſatisfying himſelf with admiring the beautiful declivities of this truly enchanting country, during the ſpace of ſix weeks, now propoſed to ſpend a few days at Briſtol in their return to Hatfield Grove.

Miſs Stapleton obſerved, that during the courſe of her mortal life (which amounted to fifty-eight years) ſhe had never entered that place of iniquity.

"Then," anſwered Mr. Sackville,

"we

"we will take you with us; for truly, coz, thou art ſo encruſted with methodiſtical ruſt, that a little of the Briſtolian poliſh is abſolutely neceſſary to give us an idea of your true colour.

It was not without much perſuaſion that ſhe conſented to be of the party; however, on condition that ſhe might be ſuffered to retire whenever her heart pointed out the neceſſity of prayers, either for herſelf or friends, (the latter of which ſhe aſſured Mr. Sackville were never forgot in thoſe breathings of the ſpirit, fearing ſhe had many incapable of that ſacred office, being in a ſtate of reprobation, and uncalled to the ſeat of mercy) ſhe condeſcended to prepare for the journey.

Mr. Sackville aſſured her ſhe ſhould be under no reſtraint; and a week from this period, to the no ſmall joy of Terentia, who was by no means gratified by this viſit, they left the ſacred manſion

of Miſs Stapleton, and ſet forward to the more enlivening ſcenes of Briſtol.

The ſecond day after their arrival, as they were taking an airing in order to reconnoitre the town and its environs, Groveſby, in a very elegant chariot, accompanied by Miſs Muſgrove, paſſed their carriage.

Mr. Bryant looked wiſhfully out of the window, and the countenance of Terentia underwent ſuch a variety of changes, that Henry with great earneſtneſs enquired the cauſe of her diſorder.

Terentia replied ſhe was not very well; while Miſs Stapleton, who held the power of love in the utmoſt deteſtation, (the celeſtial and platonic excepted) and who, from ſeeing a handſome young gentleman in the carriage, and obſerving the emotion of our heroine, ſuppoſed herſelf to be in poſſeſſion of the cauſe of her diſorder, with uplifted hands and eyes, exclaimed,

"O

"O generation of ſenſualiſts! how does carnal inclination overpower the ſpiritual! why, couſin Terentia, would you caſt an eye on ſuch a dangerous piece of temptation?"

"Do you ſpeak experimentally, madam?" ſaid Mr. Sackville, piqued at the groſſneſs of her inſinuations, "if ſo, you have given us an excellent reaſon for your perpetual excurſions to devotion; as it is certainly the duty of every Chriſtian to pray againſt thoſe ſins *which moſt eaſily beſet them.*"

"No, Sir," ſhe anſwered, "I have, thank heaven been preſerved from all follies of that kind; my motive for ſpeaking was merely to hint my diſlike to the faſhionable method of our modern fine ladies; who, I am extremely ſorry to ſay, make ſuch indecent uſe of their eyes, that I have more than once been obliged to hold my fan before *mine*, to hide the bluſhes ſuch ill-judged wantonneſs had occaſioned."

Terentia was too much engaged by the rencontre, to notice this ſpecimen of a quality, which ſhe had from her firſt knowledge of her couſin, found on many occaſions that ſhe poſſeſſed in an eminent degree.

In their return home, a large concourſe of people had gathered together, within a few doors of their lodgings, ſo that the carriage could not conveniently paſs; and on aſking a countryman the reaſon, he anſwered,

"Why, an it pleaſe your honours, there be two great lords, who becauſe they have nothing elſe to do with their money, have taken it into their heads to lay a vaſt huge wager about nothing in the world but a lady's bonnet; and becauſe as how ſhe is rather ſhy, and don't like to be ſtared at, ſhe run into that there houſe; and ſo an it pleaſe your honours, they ſtand there to dog her as it were, as they may know how to decide the wager: if it is a *traiten*, why the

the lord on the right hand will win five hundred pounds; and if it is not why, an it pleaſe your worſhips, he muſt ſit down with the loſs on't.

Miſs Stapleton now began to pray with an audible voice, that the poor lady might get out of the clutches of ſuch extravagant ſpendthrifts.

Her voice arreſted the attention of the gentleman on the right hand, whom Terentia immediately knew to be lord Aſhton, and a few minutes after came out the lady, who had ſo muffled up her face, that not the leaſt traces of it were viſible, yet the air and walk ſtruck our heroine as ſomething very ſimilar to that of his lady's.

The wager being decided in favour of his lordſhip, the croud diſperſed; they reached their lodging without further incident, and in the evening, Henry perſuaded Terentia to accompany him to the ball room.

Miſs Stapleton urged by affection (as ſhe ſaid) to watch and protect her couſin

Terentia,

Terentia, offered to accompany them to this inſipid amuſement; not that ſhe would dance; for ſhe would take Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exerciſes of the Heart, by way of paſſing the tedious hours away with ſome degree of rectitude, it being utterly impoſſible for her to enjoy the continual ſhuffling of the dancers, or the ſtill more vibrating diſturbance of the muſic.

The gentlemen ſmiled, and Mr. Sackville, in order to try the ſincerity of her ridiculous prudery, offered, on condition that Mr. Bryant would accompany him, to put on his dancing pumps, and walk a minuet with her.

"La, Sir!" with a ſimper was the anſwer.

On retiring to dreſs, Miſs Stapleton aſked Terentia if ſhe really thought her father in earneſt?

"Doubtleſs," ſhe anſwered, "and I really think you will make a very graceful pair, and do honour to the times in

in

in which you were initiated in that polite accompliſhment.

"Why indeed, my dear," ſhe anſwered, "I have been counted a great proficient in that ſcience, that is, in my younger days—and I believe I can *now* do pretty well, if Mr. Sackville has but as good a notion as myſelf—but, my dear, what dreſs ſhall I wear, my pink or my yellow—which do you think will be the moſt becoming? One would wiſh to appear like other people, you know, in ſuch a large aſſembly."

Terentia, diverted at the turn in the old maid, had juſt adviſed her to figure away in her pink, when the maid entered (ſent by Mr. Sackville) with the beforementioned book.

"Pſhaw!" cried her lady, "you are in a violent hurry—I did not want it immediately—go fetch my pink dreſs and gauze lining, and be ſure you find that phial which contains the *ſpecific drops for the ſtomach.*" This laſt order

was

was given with a look of ſignificance which, perhaps, the maid did not chuſe to underſtand; for ſhe ſoon returned with the dreſs, linen, and phial! but to the no ſmall aſtoniſhment of Terentia, the words ſpecific drops — were changed into the more valuable expletive of that all powerful, and moſt aſſured creator of love and beauty, called the Venetian bloom.

Terentia was too well-bred to ſport with the feelings of her fellow-creatures; being ſenſible that perfection was no where to be found—ſhe therefore, without letting Miſs Stapleton know ſhe obſerved the coſmetic, left her to her toilet, and returned to her own.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXIV.

A Ball—with a plan for revenge.

HENRY and Terentia had juſt begun the firſt minuet, when Mr. Groveſby and Miſs Muſgrove entered —on the ſight of an object which had ever occupied the firſt place in his heart, he turned pale—while the eyes of Miſs Muſgrove darted diſdainfully on the ſuperior beauties of our heroine, whoſe elegant ſtile of dreſs gave new luſtre to her all-faſcinating charms——She endeavoured, however, to compoſe her ruffled ſpirits; and approaching Mr. Bryant, enquired if Mr. Conyers was always

always ſo very obliging and polite as to allow his lady a ciciſbeo.

" Mr. Conyers," anſwered Mr. Bryant, " has not yet the honour of being a huſband."

Mr. Groveſby, who, during this ſpeech being too deep in thought to addreſs his friend—now rouſed by this all-cheering intelligence—ruſhed forward, ſaying:

" Is Miſs Sackville free, then?"

Mr. Bryant ſmiled, and bowed.

On the wings of ſoft affection Groveſby haſtened to the chair of Terentia, who had ſet down on his entrance, being totally unable to go through her part of the dance.

Henry aroſe, and offered him his ſeat—looks of thanks ſpoke the language of Groveſby's heart—while he begged Terentia to confirm the bleſſed tidings which ſtill, as he ſaid, vibrated through his ſoul.

She confirmed it, and liſtened to the

profeſſions of affection which ſhe could not doubt, with a degree of ſatisfaction ſhe had never before experienced.

He ſtaid not longer than to expreſs his joy on a diſcovery ſo grateful to his wiſhes, and to promiſe he would ſee her the next morning—for dreading leſt the ungovernable paſſion of Miſs Muſgrove ſhould by ſome means impede the happineſs which now ſeemed within his graſp, he pretended a ſlight indiſpoſition, and returned home, much to the diſſatisfaction of his companion.

There was ſomething in the ſudden departure of Groveſby, that amazed Terentia—yet the joy he expreſſed on finding her free, baniſhed every doubt of her future felicity.

Little gratification fell to the ſhare of Miſs Muſgrove; every reaſonable faculty being obſcured in the baleful paſſions of jealouſy and wounded pride, the rancour of which ſo poiſoned every propenſity to that ſoftneſs which for ſome

time

time had marked her behaviour to Groveſby, that the bittereſt reproaches fell from her lips.

While Groveſby, unconſcious of deceiving her, begged her to call to her aid that greatneſs of ſoul and neceſſary dignity which could alone render the moſt beautiful of her ſex objects of regard to the worthy of his.

Finding her ill-judged paſſion would avail her nothing, ſhe changed her behavour to that of a more endearing kind —ſaid, her affection for him was unconquerable; that ſhe could not exiſt without him; and finally, that ſuch was his power over her, ſhe would rather truſt to his *honour*, than be the wife of the firſt monarch on earth!

He again beſought her to be compoſed, and to ſupport herſelf with propriety; and promiſed on no other condition to regard her as a friend.

Tears of deſpair now ruſhed in torrents

rents down her face, as ſhe vowed never to ſurvive his marriage with another.

The heart of Groveſby was replete with ſenſibility. He was truly ſorry that a woman, who had received a virtuous education, ſhould thus diſgrace it by profeſſions which only became the mouth of a courtezan—yet her conduct had, in every other inſtance, appeared irreproachable—his ſituation too, and that in which ſhe had thought Miſs Sackville to be placed—where in his candid opinion circumſtances in her favour — He regretted with the higheſt concern that ſhe had ever became a favourite with lady Belinda, and reflected on himſelf for ſuffering her to be of their party to Briſtol.

When they returned home they found Sir Paulet at ſupper. — The baronet had for ſome time, from the behaviour of Miſs Muſgrove, expected ſhe would wheedle Groveſby to marry her, and

as he had from obſtinacy once made him wretched, he had determined in future not to oppoſe his deſigns. He was therefore ſurpriſed to find the former the picture of ſilent grief, and the latter thoughtful and reſerved.

During the reſt of the evening Mr. Groveſby, by thinking on his future proſpects, became more happy and leſs intereſted in the indiſcretions of his couſin—and Miſs Muſgrove *who had now* ſomething in view to gratify her reigning paſſion, affected a ſerenity of thought, to which ſhe was a ſtranger—but as it was not conſiſtent with her plot, that Groveſby ſhould relate to his father what, according to her ideas, would come much better from her own mouth, ſhe ſtirred not till the ſervant of Sir Paulet entered with lights to conduct him to bed, and then, to the aſtoniſhment of Groveſby, begged a few minutes converſation with the baronet in private.

My

My readers will doubtleſs be anxious to learn the purport of this deſired audience; having no idea that a handſome girl of twenty-four, ſhould condeſcend to make an offer of her hand to Sir Paulet Groveſby!—Yet, certain it is, this was really the caſe:

Though paſt his grand climacteric, Sir Paulet was ſtill a fine figure of a man—and, in his youth, had been much noted for intrigue—on this foundation Miſs Muſgrove had built her hopes of ſucceſs, the gratification of which appeared to her of much more importance than all the diſagreeable occurrences which would doubtleſs interrupt the little felicity which ſuch an union could be productive of—by this means ſhe could take precedence of her hated rival; and, perhaps, be enabled to diſinherit the inſulting tyrant, who had ſo mortified and ſcorned her love.

A flood of tears preceded the tale ſhe had to unfold; Sir Paulet, moved

by her ſeeming diſtreſs, beſought her to be calm.—

She was miſerable, ſhe ſaid, for the ingratitude of Mr. Groveſby, to ſo tender a father.

The Baronet, ſurpriſed at an opening ſo wholly unintelligible, with much earneſtneſs, begged ſhe would proceed.—

She then related the interview between Terentia and his ſon, adding:—"were I his father, I would let him ſee that ſuch premeditated defiance to my will, ſhould not go unpuniſhed!"

Sir Paulet, who ſtill ſuppoſed Terentia to be the wife of Conyers, was ſo far from being offended at this intelligence, that he anſwered:

"Well, well—he cannot marry her you know—and all young fellows have their frolics; I have had mine, *my girl*, in my time! though now, God help me, I am obliged to relinquiſh all thoſe comforts

comforts for a warm room, and a bandage of flannels!"

This was the critical moment—a bold ſtroke was neceſſary—or her ſcheme might prove abortive;—ſhe therefore, with all the ſoftneſs in her power, anſwered:

"You are not ſo old, Sir Paulet, but you might indulge yourſelf if your inclinations ſo led you, with the comfortable ſolace which ariſes from being bleſſed with a companion, who, in my humble opinion, might ſmooth the thorny road of your declining life!—there are many women, and young ones too, who would have no objection to ſuch a partner." This was accompanied with a look ſo languiſhing!—that the baronet was inſtantly inſpired with a new train of ideas.

"Do you think ſo! my dear girl;" he anſwered—bridling with ſelf-conſequence; "if I could ſuppoſe myſelf ſo

happy——but it cannot be—I am miſtaken—you only meant to joke me."

"Indeed!" replied Miſs Muſgrove, highly gratified with the Baronet's manner, "I was never more ſerious in my life!—I do aſſure you"——A bluſh, and a pauſe enſued.—

"What!—What!"—cried the Baronet, eagerly, "Say!—What—my ſweet girl!—Why do you pauſe?——Tell me what you was going to ſay—A new creation of thought has ſprung up in my ſoul!—Do, my deareſt life, tell me of what you was going to aſſure me of!"

"Excuſe me, Sir Paulet—you will think I act not with propriety—I cannot, indeed, tell you."

"By heavens!" cried the Baronet, ſetting by his crutch, and advancing towards her, "I muſt hear it—I would not part with you for the world!—you know not how happy you have made me!—

me!—Keep me not in ſuſpence, and aſſure yourſelf of my eternal affection."

"Why then, if I muſt obey you—I was going to aſſure you—that—that—la! Sir Paulet, why will you preſs me to ſay it—that I would rather be the wife of Sir Paulet Groveſby, than that of a much younger gentleman."

Joy animated the countenance of the Baronet, as he graciouſly thanked her for this kind condeſcenſion—and when, added he, ſhall the ceremony be performed—I ſhall never reſt till our nuptials are ſolemnized.

Miſs Muſgrove then begged he would be ſecret with regard to her folly; for ſuch, ſhe doubted not, in the eye of the world it would appear!"

Not for the univerſe, my angel, would I divulge it; not even my ſon ſhall be made acquainted with this happy turn in my fate, till it is out of his power to give me that advice which I know he

will think incumbent on him to give. Suppoſe, to prevent any diſagreeable impertinences which may naturally attend this affair, we ſend Orland immediately for a ſpecial licenſe. He can keep a ſecret; and I am determined, that is, with your leave, my dear girl, to be made happy without delay."

"To this, Miſs Muſgrove made no objection, and having gained her point, ſhe returned to her room; in her way thither ſhe met Groveſby, who, equally anxious as herſelf to relate his evening adventure—had waited the opening of his father's door, to attend him for that purpoſe.

Sir Paulet, as ſoon as his intended was gone, began to turn his thoughts on his future eſtabliſhment—and likewiſe to try, for the firſt time ſince his arrival at the Wells, to walk acroſs the room without his crutches—well knowing that an appendage of that kind was very

very improper for a bridegroom to figure away with.

Whether all ſenſe of pain lies in the mind, I am not going to aver—but certain it is, that from the new ideas that had taken poſſeſſion of the Baronet, he not only got acroſs the room, but with ſuch alacrity, that when Mr. Groveſby entered, he ſtartled to behold him nimbly tripping towards the bell, in order to ſend Orland for a licenſe.

This interruption was rather diſagreeable—the Baronet with ſome confuſion retired ſlowly to his chair.

Mr. Groveſby related the incident of the evening, and beſought him, with all that filial reverence which he never loſt ſight of, to give him his conſent to marry this firſt and only object of his love.

Struck with the dutiful behaviour of the child of his affection—a ſomething not the moſt agreeable, came acroſs his

mind on his own intended duplicity—yet to confeſs an act ſo derogatory to that ſolid underſtanding for which he had been famed, was a taſk he could by no means think of—and to give up a ſcheme from which he had promiſed himſelf ſuch perfect happineſs, was quite foreign to his intention. He therefore contented himſelf with aſſuring his ſon, that he was at liberty to act agreeably to his wiſhes, which he doubted not would be juſtified by prudence—and that he expected, if any change with regard to himſelf ſhould take place, he would, with equal candour, acquit him of an impropriety of conduct.

Gratified at the grant of his requeſt—yet perplexed at the ambiguity of the latter part of his ſpeech—Groveſby was about to beg an explanation, when Orland entered the room; and ſuppoſing he had particular buſineſs with his maſter,

maſter, he left it, and returned to his own.

Orland, who was a particular favourite with his maſter, and who adored young Groveſby, on hearing the buſineſs he had to tranſact, ventured to expoſtulate on the infirmities of old age; and hinted, that with a middle-aged woman of character, prudence, and good-nature, he would ſtand a much greater chance of happineſs, than with one, who he muſt be free to ſay, did not appear in his opinion, to be in the poſſeſſion of any one virtue eſſential to the rendering him happy.

"'Tis falſe, villain!" cried Sir Paulet, ſtamping with paſſion, "ſhe *adores me!* and if that is not the moſt eſſential thing towards happineſs, I don't know what is—Infirmities, indeed! what, becauſe the laſt two or three eaſterly winds brought on a little touch of the gout—I am to be denied all the bleſ-

ſings of life!—I never felt myſelf more free from infirmity than at this inſtant—and as to thoſe crutches—I deſire I may ſee them no more! it was all a trick of your's and your young maſter's, to make me appear more ancient, that they were ever in uſe at all."

Orland, finding the Baronet determined, knew it would be in vain to argue farther on the matter, and the Baronet continued:

"Mark me, Orland; I enjoin you to get a ſpecial licenſe, as early as you can to-morrow morning; and on pain of my eternal diſpleaſure, hint not, even in the moſt diſtant manner, this affair to my ſon."

The heart of Orland recoiled at a buſineſs ſo repugnant to his ideas of rectitude; but his whole dependance was on his maſter, and he was obliged to obey; he therefore ſet off on an excellent

cellent courſer, and rode poſt to London to purchaſe a chain for Sir Paulet, which he doubted not, would render him unhappy during the remainder of his exiſtence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

An adventure—and a tale of woe.

AS the Sackville party were returning home, their attention was arrested by the voice of a female, who ſat on the ſteps of a door—her appearance was that of an unhappy midnight wanderer, and her voice was the voice of diſtreſs.

Henry alighted from the carriage, and offered her his aſſiſtance — In the language of poignant grief ſhe thanked him, but ſaid, ſhe wiſhed not to be relieved—ſhe wiſhed but to die in peace!

The voice ſtruck Terentia as one familiar

miliar to her ear—ſhe begged her father would permit her to ſpeak a word of comfort to the unhappy perſon; being convinced, as ſhe ſaid, ſhe had a right to her protection.

Mr. Sackville conſented, and at the well-known voice of Terentia, lady Aſhton, for it was no other, gave a ſudden ſhriek, and fainted away!

With the aſſiſtance of hartſhorn ſhe ſoon recovered, and by order of Mr. Sackville, (who took great pleaſure in repaying the obligations which his daughter had received) ſhe ſupplied the place of Henry; who, during the reſt of their way home accompanied Miſs Stapleton in her own vis-à-vis.

That lady, for Mr. Sackville (the joke once paſſed) had never ſo much as thought of performing his promiſe—was, on the entrance of Henry, in the middle of an ejaculation for the protection of Providence to preſerve her in future

future from becoming a dupe to the artifice of ſuch brutes—

The laſt mentioned word being ſpoke in the full reſentment of her heart, it vibrated through the ears of Henry; who, ignorant of the real cauſe of her reſentment, concluded it aroſe from the incident before mentioned; he therefore replied:

"Indeed, Madam, I am entirely of your opinion; it is evident the poor creature has met with ill-treatment—perhaps from the very wretch that has thus lowered her in the eye of virtue!"

The thoughts of Miſs Stapleton were too intent on what ſhe ſuppoſed her own diſgrace, to attened to the misfortunes of another. The coach had ſtopped, it is true, but ſhe was too deeply engaged to liſten to the cauſe; nor did ſhe notice the foregoing part of Henry's obſervation; and concluding from the latter, that he thought her lowered, by this failure of the above promiſe

promiſe; ſhe with a look of importance which the flambeau rendered viſible, anſwered:

"Truly, Sir, I think I ſhould have ſunk much lower, in my own opinion, by condeſcending to dance at all.—I promiſe you, I ſhould, on reflection, never have forgiven myſelf for ſuch a piece of indecorum."

Henry, now perfectly ſenſible of her miſtake, and willing to reconcile her to the terrible diſappointment, anſwered:

"Mr. Sackville, I will venture to ſay, has too high an opinion of your good ſenſe, and ſteadineſs of principle, Madam, to ſuppoſe you would condeſcend to oblige him, or otherwiſe he moſt certainly would have availed himſelf of the honour of your hand."

This compliment gratified her vanity—ſhe was pleaſed, and chatted away with eaſy familiarity, till the carriage ſtopped at their lodgings.

A room

A room was inſtantly ordered to be got ready for the reception of lady Aſhton; and Terentia, eager to know how ſhe could ſerve her, deſired a ſmall repaſt in her own room, that ſhe might, by the efforts of friendſhip, in ſome meaſure relieve her from that anguiſh which it was evident had long preyed on her mind. As ſoon as they were alone, her ladyſhip flung her arms round the neck of Terentia, and bathing it with tears of contrition, gave her the following account of her life, ſince the unfortunate period which cauſed Terentia to fly from her protection:

"What can I," ſaid that unhappy woman, "plead in excuſe for that folly which has coſt me ſo dear!—'tis true, my pride had received a mortal ſtab, by the neglect of him, who at the time I gave him my hand, was in the poſſeſſion of my moſt tender regards—But was that a reaſon that I ſhould deſert myſelf? Ah, no! Had the rein of rectitude

guided

guided me in that fatal exigency, what a world of misery had I escaped!—but it did not—and against conviction—I plunged into that abyss of infamy from whence no virtue returns unsul-lied.

"Gratified by the notice of a man, who was in every thing equal, in many accomplishments superior to him who ought to have been my best friend—I passed some months comparatively happy—but a short time convinced me, that the duration of illicit pleasure is transient as the morning dews; reflection embittered my days, and my nights, uncheered by the balm of sleep, were spent in unavailing woe.

"Behaviour so ill-calculated to retain the affection of a libertine; first robbed me of his company, and then of his protection—I saw him but seldom—and when I did see him—his behaviour but plunged the already pointed dagger still deeper in my overcharged heart.

"With

"With a perſon too much above the common for a menial employment — and a mind too much weakened to bear its own reflections in confinement — diſappointed too of that reſource which my lord had promiſed me — and too conſcious of my own ill conduct to trouble him for it—I condeſcended to hint the terrors of my mind—the idea of being abandoned to an unpitying world; but judge of my feelings, for they are utterly undeſcribable, when the following anſwer convinced me humanity had not a place in his heart:

'While your ladyſhip has *a huſband*, I ſee no occaſion for thoſe needleſs fears. I have buſineſs that requires my immediate attention; and therefore muſt take my leave.'

"Determined, however, to ſtarve, rather than again ſolicit favour from a wretch ſo void of principle, I left the next day in company with my maid the Continent, and ſet ſail for England,

where

where I determined, by ſome means, to procure by induſtry that ſupport which could alone bring real pleaſure to the indigent.

"But the hand of power had not here ſet a limit to my ſufferings. We hired a lodging in Windmill-ſtreet, on the evening of our arrival; here we had not been many days, when my maid fell ſick of a putrid fever, which in leſs than a week deprived me of her aſſiſtance for ever.

"I alſo caught the infection; and on my recovery, whether by defraud or neceſſity I know not, but I found myſelf diſpoſſeſſed of all my caſh, which was fifteen guineas and ſome ſilver, and in the poſſeſſion of a few changes of raiment only: all which the woman aſſured me had been expended in my three weeks illneſs; during which time I had, by the violence of my diſorder, been rendered inſenſible to every thing that paſſed.

"The

"The ill ſtate of my mind did not forward my recovery; a week more had elapſed, yet I found myſelf too weak to apply to any kind of buſineſs. I began a letter to Mr. Burdet, but conſcious ſhame deterred me from complaining to one who had ſo juſtly predicted the fatal conſequences of my raſh folly, and with tears of anguiſh I committed the affecting ſcroll to the flames.

"In a ſituation too miſerable for deſcription, I was ſitting one evening, when a very handſome carriage paſſed the door: on the woman's ſpeaking with wonder of its ſuperbneſs, I aroſe to look at it—the well-known arms of Aſhton, like the blaſting lightning, darted before my eyes, and created that poignant reflection, which is the conſtant concomitant of that mind whoſe diſtreſs is heightened by the ſtings of remorſe. I regretted that ill-judged paſſion which had cauſed me to think of

retaliating

retaliating my wrongs, and would have given the whole world to have been poſſeſſed of that virtue which is ſo very eſſential to ſupport a life of miſery, and which alone can render the female character reſpectable.

"Dreading leſt I again ſhould be alarmed with a ſight ſo deſtructive to my peace, I determined to leave that part of the town; and after parting with a dreſs to pay for my lodging, I flung myſelf into a hackney-coach, and ordered it into the city.

"In one of the ſtreets that leads to the Change, I obſerved a lodging to let; it was at a ready made linen warehouſe. I ſtopped, inſpired with the hope of getting ſome employment, being, as you know, a tolerable needle-woman for a perſon of rank.

"I aſked the price of the room, and hinted my deſire with regard to the work. The miſtreſs of the houſe looked on me with ſcrutinizing eyes, and after

after whiſpering ſomething to one of the girls, which by her looks I was certain boded me no good, ſhe turned to me and ſaid,

"Why look you, young woman, I have no mind to be robbed; and it is very unlikely ſuch fine linen as you dreſs in, ſhould be earned by thoſe delicate white hands, that is, in an honeſt way. I have neither lodgings to let, or work to put out.

"Deterred, by this ſpecimen of rude incivility, from attempting to ſupplicate any more of the arrogant upſtarts of the large metropolis, I ordered the man to drive me to the inn where the Briſtol ſtage puts up—and had the good fortune (as I then thought it) to find it juſt ſetting off, with two places vacant.

"Here I fortunately got employ at a milliner's ſhop; but this morning, going to a lady with a box of linen, near the pump-room, lord Aſhton, with a gen-

a gentleman unknown, paſſed by me, and by laying a ſimple wager about my bonnet, detained me ſo long, that my employer ſent the ſervant in ſearch of me, who unkindly miſrepreſented the affair; and I, in the utmoſt diſgrace, was inſtantly diſcharged; and told I might get my clothes how I could.

"Without a character; without a friend! and without what is ſtill more neceſſary, the means to pay for a lodging, I traverſed the ſtreets in vain; till weary with fatigue I ſunk down, begging of heaven to forgive my offences, and take me to his mercy.

"In this ſituation I was accoſted by my own footman, with the rude language of the midnight reveller; and on my ſhrinking from his unhallowed touch in ſilent contempt, he had the barbarity to ſtrike me. My voice would have expoſed me to pain more poignant than that which I now experienced; while the wretch fearing, from

my

my ſtaggering, he had given me a mortal blow, left me in an agony of mind almoſt inſupportable.

"You ſoon reached the ſpot—need I ſay more, but that your humanity has reſcued me from a crime ſtill blacker than I have yet committed—yes, my ever-valued friend, you have ſaved me from ſelf-murder! can you, after what you have heard, pity and forgive the wretch who has through her own miſconduct rendered herſelf offenſive to virtue?

"Can I," cried Terentia, whoſe eyes gliſtened with inward joy at the idea of having ſaved this unhappy woman from the dreadful crime of ſuicide—yes, my once kind benefactreſs, if a ſympathizing friend can baniſh misfortune from your mind—you have yet a chance for happineſs."

"How!" cried lady Aſhton, "have I deſerved this good-nature? I that have (to ſet a gloſs on my own infamy) con-

condeſcended to darken in the world's eye, a character altogether ſpotleſs.—Oh, Miſs Sackville, your lenity has planted a dagger in my heart! How can I ever look up to purity ſo void of that rigour which too often characterizes a woman of virtue!"

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During this interval, Mr. Bryant had ſo well pleaded the cauſe of Groveſby, that Mr. Sackville had given his word to receive him for his ſon-in-law, on condition that Sir Paulet was likewiſe agreeable to the union: and on Terentia's returning to the parlour to relate to her friends lady Aſhton's tale, and plead for that unhappy wanderer, Mr. Sackville ſignified his intention to make her happy in the huſband of her choice; and promiſed to ſettle her ladyſhip in a little box, not far diſtant from

Hatfield Grove, where ſhe might (as he ſaid) give the world a ſpecimen of her ſincerity, by leading a life of penitence.

Miſs Stapleton obſerved, that her couſin Terentia was carrying her idea of charity by much too far —"I have no notion," ſhe added, "of providing for ſuch looſe wantons.—If, indeed, ſhe had juſtified this piece of charity by living a life of virtue, much might have been ſaid on the ſubject; but the object conſidered with that proper deteſtation of her crimes which muſt naturally ariſe from the breaſt of piety, the merit of the act is entirely loſt, at leaſt in my opinion."

"Hey day, Miſs Stapleton!" cried Mr. Sackville, "with ſubmiſſion to your pious propenſities, I muſt beg leave to remind you of a part of the Scriptures, which I fear you have overlooked. Are we not told there is more rejoicing over one ſinner that repenteth,

than

than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, who need no repentance?"

"A moſt pernicious doctrine," anſwered Miſs Stapleton, "and as inconſiſtent to common ſenſe"—

"As the portrait of piety without the traces of humanity," interrupted Mr. Sackville, as he aroſe to withdraw for the evening.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

In which the Hiſtory draws near the concluſion.

THE ſpirits of Groveſby were too much exhilarated to give way to the ſoft lures of Morpheus. He told the tedious arrival of each tardy hour —ruminated on the reception he ſhould meet with—and revolved in his mind all thoſe ſcenes of felicity which, in proſpective, danced before his delighted imagination.

With this diſpoſition of mind, my readers will not be ſurprized to find, that long before the uſual hour of breakfaſt, he had taken his ſeat in the parlour of

of Mr. Sackville. But as politeneſs would not ſuffer him to have his arrival announced at ſo unſeaſonable an hour, he amuſed himſelf with a book till the entrance of Mr. Sackville gave him an opportunity of ſoliciting his conſent to make happy the object of his tendereſt regards.

That gentleman being entirely ſatisfied with the merits of our lover had, as it has been before ſaid, but one objection, viz. the free conſent of Sir Paulet; and as Mr. Groveſby had it in his power to ſatisfy him in that point, the old gentleman ſhook him by the hand with the kind cordiality of a friend, and rung for the ſervant to announce him to her lady.

Terentia, who perhaps was as little inclined to befriend the drowſy god as himſelf, was ſiting ready dreſſed at her toilet when the maid entered; and on her ſaying Mr. Groveſby, ma'am,—I know, I know, ſhe anſwered; and in-

ſtantly ſpringing from the chair, was at the bottom of the ſtair-caſe before the maid had recovered from the amazement into which her lady's precipitation had thrown her.

Mr. Sackville met her at the door, and with a look of paternal affection took her hand;—"Receive, Sir, (preſenting her to the enraptured Groveſby) with my bleſſing, the future partner of your life; and permit me to ſay, that if goodneſs of heart, true affection, and a mind untainted with the follies of the age can inſure you true felicity, you have more than a chance to attain it."

Scarcely had they time to expreſs their gratitude for his ſo kindly giving into their wiſhes, when Henry, who had been employed in giving ſome directions for fitting up the houſe appropriated for the reſidence of lady Aſhton, entered; and being preſented by his father to Mr. Groveſby, as that ſon whom

whom he had long mourned, a friendſhip took place; and from thoſe congenial propenſities of the human mind, which are ſo eſſential to the continuance of that blam to the human heart, it promiſed to be laſting as the ſprings of life.

After an agreeable day, in which the *feaſt of reaſon*, and the *flow of ſouls*, had conſpired to render it pleaſing beyond the conception of thoſe unequal to the joy which ſuch a ſelect party inſpires, they were ſitting down to ſupper, when a poſt coach entered the yard. It was Mr. Mountaign, and in it himſelf, his lady, and daughter.

Terentina flew to receive them, and was expreſſing herſelf in terms of pleaſure on the friendſhip of the viſit, when Mrs. Mountaign interrupted her, by ſaying,

My dear girl, I know not if I *now* merit this grateful welcome, as I aſſure you

you this viſit was merely accidental—to ſay truth, it was dictated by curioſity.

By this time they had reached the parlour. On ſeeing Mr. Groveſby, Mrs. Mountaign ſtarted, and exclaimed,

"Good Heavens! Sir, what is the meaning of all this?—can it be poſſible—how came you here?

Mr. Groveſby concluding that Mrs. Mountaign was ſtill ignorant with regard to the death of lady Belinda;—after caſting his eye on his ſable dreſs, took the hand of Terentia, and anſwered,

"This, madam, is the taliſman that has long enchanted me—and this again, turning his eyes on his dreſs—the emblem of that freedom which alone could have juſtified me in paying this viſit.

"Well," ſaid Mr. Mountaign, "this is the moſt enigmatical buſineſs I ever ſaw; half an hour ago we met your carriage, your ſervants out of mourning

ing—their hats decorated with white ribbons; and yourſelf, as your ſervant informed mine, in comany with your new made bride, hurrying down to your country ſeat.—And now, by the help of your good angel (for ſo I muſt think it) we behold you looſed from the chains of Hymen, and in company with the only woman that can render you happy, as the whole tenor of your conduct deſerves."

Groveſby ſmiled, and jocoſely enquired to whom his imagination, or rather the unaccountable miſtake of the ſervants, had fettered him?

"Nay," ſaid Mrs. Mountaign, "I declare I ſaw Miſs Muſgrove and a gentleman; and though the velocity of the carriage, together with the duſkineſs of the evening, prevented me from taking notice of his perſon, I have not the leaſt doubt, by the appearancce of feſtivity, which marked the retinue, but ſhe is actually married."

"Miſs Muſgrove!" cried Groveſby, with looks of aſtoniſhment, "nay, then I have too much reaſon to fear there is ſome truth in this matter—yet ſurely ſhe could not.—But after what I have witneſſed of her conduct, why ſhould I doubt it—yes, her diabolical propenſity to revenge, has certainly ſtimulated her to this act. She has moſt aſſuredly found out the weak ſide of my father, to hurl perdition (as ſhe ſuppoſes) on my head. Cruel, unprincipled girl; what an abyſs of miſery may not this imprudent ſcheme be productive of to both, nay, to myſelf!"

Mr. Bryant inſtantly ſet out to the lodgings of Sir Paulet.

He ſoon returned, with the confirmation of the news; and the following letter, which had been left for Mr. Groveſby's inſpection on his dreſſing table.

Who,

Dear P.

"Before this reaches you, I ſhall have taken a ſtep which may, perhaps, in your eyes appear unaccountable—nay, imprudent.—Be that as it may, I have followed the dictates of my own inclination; example which you are *now* at liberty to enjoy—and for which I do not hold myſelf accountable to any one.

"I am too much agitated by the felicity which ſeems *now* within my reach, to ſay more than, that if you can, with that reſpect which is due to the wife of my choice, wiſh me joy on this happy occaſion, lady Groveſby and myſelf will be glad to ſee you at Groveſby-place."

"N.B. To prevent any diſagreement, I now inform you, that you muſt not expect any addition to that fortune you have already received, as the reſidue of mine may, perhaps, be rendered neceſſary to the proviſion of an increaſing family."

P. G.

This letter, the poſtſcript of which had too little of the father in it to leave a doubt of its dictator, was a ſevere trial to the fortitude of Groveſby—as the fortune of lady Belinda, by her dying without iſſue, deſcended to another branch of the family—and, as the idea of a father's marriage had never ſtruck him—much of what he expected was ſtill in the hands of Sir Paulet—ſo that the whole of his income did not amount to more than eight hundred a year.

This unaccountable turn in his affairs had therefore rendered him very unequal, in point of fortune, to Terentia. — His ſenſibility, in which was blended true generoſity of ſpirit, could not but render him unhappy, at a misfortune which ſeemed to ſtrike at the very root of all his promiſed felicity!

"Let not this news affect you, Sir;" ſaid Mr. Sackville, who ſaw and pitied his emotion, "I have more than enough

to

to enſure your felicity. Believe me, ſuch is the high opinion which I have of your merits, and ſuch my ardent deſire to confer happineſs on my child—that had Sir Paulet cut you off with a ſhilling, it would not have leſſened my deſire of calling you my ſon! and Terentia cannot oblige me more than by fixing an early day. I long to let the Baronet know, that without leſſening his abſurd proviſion for an increaſing family—the huſband of Terentia Sackville will be enabled, not only to live in affluence, but in ſplendour and magnificence!"

After treating this generous advance with that grateful return it deſerved, Mr. Groveſby, addreſſing Terentia, ſaid:

"Can you, Miſs Sackville, condeſcend to take to your arms a bankrupt, who has little more than the pureſt affection to offer you?"

"Be aſſured, Sir," ſhe anſwered, "my higheſt ambition will be gratified by

by having it in my power to ſet you above the revenge of that ill-principled woman; and that to render your future life happy, will ever be the firſt wiſh of my heart."

The tear of affectionate ſenſibility gliſtened in the eyes of Groveſby as he thanked her for a promiſe ſo grateful to his wiſhes.

The following week, Groveſby, to the entire ſatisfaction of his friends, and the inexpreſſible joy of himſelf, received the hand of Terentia; and the next day, having parted with their town friends, they ſet out on their journey to Groveſby-place, where they arrived juſt as the firſt courſe of a ſumptuous dinner was ſerved in.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXIX.

In which is displayed the fatal effects of ungovernable paſſion — and in which the hiſtory is concluded.

GROVESBY, happy beyond his utmoſt wiſh, forgot the little reſentment which had taken place in his breaſt on his father's ſtrange conduct. He experienced a pang, indeed, on entering the houſe, but it was occaſioned by no ſelf-intereſted motive. The idea of a father's happineſs, or rather miſery, engroſſed his attention, ſince with a partner ſo ill-calculated to produce the former; the latter, he feared, could hardly be avoided.

The

The Baronet, who *now* found it neceſſary to cauſe hoſtilities to ceaſe, with his cructh-ſtick had juſt ſeated himſelf at table; while his lady, (unheedful of the continual murmurs — oaths — and other expletives of that torture which conquers reaſon even in the moſt patient diſpoſitions, when torn by the excruciating pangs of that cruel diſorder) was helping him very plentifully to ſome thin ſoup, ſtrenuouſly recommending it as a much better antidote to the gout, than any of thoſe delicious viands with which the table abounded.

To this ſage advice, Sir Paulet, who had an utter averſion to ſoup meagre, gave not his aſſent; and was beginning in a voice not unlike the awful thundering of the heavens on the approach of a ſtorm, to hint her deſire of ſlinging him into a dropſy, when the unexpected arrival of his ſon and friends diverted his ideas into another channel; and the

conſciouſneſs

conſciouſneſs of his folly ſtood ſo plainly confeſſed in every turn of his countenance, that Groveſby repented he had not made this viſit alone, when he could have ſoftened an embaraſſment little leſs diſtreſſing to the Baronet, than to his own filial heart; and in order to eraſe it, he began with his bride the uſual ceremony of introduction.

From the Baronet, ſhe met with a very gracious reception — a pang of keen reflection took poſſeſſion of his mind on the recollection of a letter, which muſt have wounded the ſenſibility of a ſon, whoſe filial piety had ever ſhone conſpicuous in all his actions.

To his lady he now advanced; and Groveſby, with a countenance expreſſive of that felicity he enjoyed, took the hand of lady Groveſby, and ſaid:

"Will you not, Madam, wiſh me joy—be aſſured, your *children* are diſpoſed to do nothing unworthy your maternal protection. Make but my father

ther happy, and reſt ſatisfied, that however I may have been ſurpriſed at a conduct ſo intricate, and at an event ſo unexpected, regret for it will no longer find a place in my heart.

A bow of cold civility was the only return for a conduct ſo diſintereſted; and during the dinner, her ladyſhip appeared agitated with the whirlwind of paſſion—diſdainful reproach now lowered on her gloomy countenance as ſhe viewed the too happy Groveſby, and the tears of mortification ſtarted from her eye as ſhe glanced with envious ſcorn over the amiable form of her hated rival.

On the firſt opportunity ſhe left the room. To ſee Groveſby baſking in the ſunſhine of felicity, in deſpite of her wretched contrivances, was more than ſhe could bear; and inſpired her with all the diſcordant paſſions of love, hatred, pride, and diſappointed malice! She, in a ſtate of frenzy, determined to put a period to that exiſtence, which

from

from early youth had been actuated by no other principles than envy, and rude tempeſtuous paſſion! For this purpoſe ſhe had recourſe to a loaded piſtol; a brace of which Sir Paulet always kept in the cloſet.

With trembling hands ſhe reached it from the place where it was depoſited—and viewed it with an eye wide-ſtretched in the purſuit of miſery eternal!

"I will not live!"—ſhe cried,—"Groveſby is happy!—while I, a dupe to my own artifice, am wretched beyond relief!—He is calm—and knows not the torture of unrequited love—but I will not witneſs his happineſs longer!—I will not again behold the bewitching charms of my too happy rival!—Life on ſuch terms is inſupportable!—No! rather let me thus free myſelf of every care!.....Now ſmile who may, for I ſhall know no more!"

The report of the piſtol alarmed the houſe; Groveſby firſt entered—the

ſpectacle

ſpectacle was too dreadful to be viewed without horror!

"Wretched woman!" he cried, "how muſt thy ſoul be tortured, e'er thus thou could'ſt arrive at this height of deſperation!—and how has the deſtructive tide of ungovernable paſſion ſunk thee beneath thyſelf!"

Mr. Bryant and Groveſby undertook to accompany Sir Paulet through this ſcene of mortality; and Terentia, would not be denied attending them; as the felicity which ſhe was ſenſible Mr. Groveſby would derive from ſuch a condeſcention, by far over-balanced in her gentle heart, the diſagreeableneſs of the undertaking.

The Baronet, charmed with the amiable ſoftneſs of her diſpoſition, and gratified by the kind attention ſhe paid him, as ſoon as the funeral was over, accompanied them to an elegant villa, the reſidence of Mr. Groveſby; declaring that

the

the intereſt of his children ſhould be, in future, his only care.

Mr. Sackville ſpent a month at Hatfield Grove; a week of which was dedicated to the gratifying his ambition in celebrating the nuptials of his children, by keeping open houſe, and exhibiting every other demonſtration of joy uſual on ſuch occaſions.

He then, in company with the Bryants, paid the promiſed viſit to Mr. Fairfax; where Henry, in the ſociety of Sophia, forgot thoſe diſappointments and unfortunate contingencies which had embittered his life. A reciprocal affection ſoon took place; and, in a ſhort time the ſacred rite of Hymen, completed their felicity.

By the deſire of Terentia, Mr. Sackville purchaſed for his favourite a handſome houſe near the reſidence of Groveſby; and having prevailed on the Bryants to reſide entirely with him, he ſpent a cheerful evening to his day of life!—

and

and Henry, Grovesby, Sophia, and Terentia, amidst the deceit, folly, and interested principles of modern attachments, experienced, in the strictest sense of the word, the blessings of that true friendship which is so essential to the felicity of human nature.

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